

The Benevolent Society to cut jobs and disability services or face financial ruin

The Benevolent Society (TBS) has announced major job losses and cuts to disability services, citing “business necessity” and “financial sustainability”.

Less than 24 months after securing a range of disability support services from the NSW Department of Family Community Services, TBS has told staff the programs are unsustainable and the organisation had considered on-selling the transferred services, or even withdrawing completely from the sector. Instead it decided to maintain a smaller commercially viable service.

In explaining the decision, TBS blamed the NDIS funding model as inadequate for some services, particularly those in regional NSW.

TBS has advised the CPSU NSW it is working towards a more sustainable operating model that will focus on allied health and behavioural support services. Other services will be scaled back or cut altogether and some offices will be closed or amalgamated in an effort to cut costs.

The NSW Government, which championed the privatisation of disability services, assured people with disability the non-government providers was “best placed” to leverage funding through “social capital” and deliver better services.

The CPSU NSW was roundly criticised by privatisation advocates for opposing the transfer of disability services from the public to non-government sector. We predicted the transfer would actually result in a reduction in services, as non-government and private providers reorganised their operations to focus on commercially sustainable programs.

We maintain the view that the NSW Government’s decision to withdraw from the disability sector has led, and will continue to lead, to many people being forced to go without essential disability support services.

Further information to come.

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