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I wish to refer to you our concern about the impact of the 3% efficiency dividend on people with disabilities and their families.

In correspondence from the Director General of the Disability Services Commission, Ron Chalmers, to all relevant stakeholders, he reported that the recent Sector Health Check found that the Commission was a 'well run organisation that is working efficiently, but to capacity' (correspondence, 26 January 2009).

This report did not reflect capacity within the organisation to reduce spending. In fact the Commission's budget has doubled since 2001 but staff numbers have not changed and size of the management team has remained stable. This appears to reflect an overall efficiency increase by the organisation. We are concerned that if this is the case, a 3% reduction in funding will further stress this organisation and services and families will suffer.

Funding for people with disabilities and their families remains inadequate and is not meeting basic needs of these members of our community and any further stress on the already stretched Commission will not assist.

Further, it has come to People With Disabilities (WA)'s attention that the efficiency dividend may result in a 6% cut in public transport, and in particular services after 8pm. This is likely to affect low income families and vulnerable people including those with disabilities who are over-represented users of these services.

All those without a driver's licence will be unable to travel after this time, increasing issues of social isolation. It is of concern as this may breach the accessible public transport action plan which is enforceable through the Australian Human Rights Commission.

I would welcome the Committee's inquiry into these concerns and am available for further consultation if required.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Durack