15 January 2025

The Australian Government has today announced the appointment of El Gibbs and Dougie Herd as the two co-chairs of the newly formed NDIS Reform Advisory Committee. These appointments continue to strengthen the lived and professional experience in key leadership roles in the NDIS.

The committee was recommended by the Independent Review into the NDIS to monitor and advise State and Territory Disability Ministers on the implementation of the NDIS reforms, including monitoring levels of engagement by government with people with disability.

The Minister for the NDIS, the Hon Bill Shorten MP, said El Gibbs and Dougie Herd bring significant experience from the disability community and from their previous experience.

“El has made an extraordinary impact on the disability and advocacy sector over more than fifteen years, and has shown incredible commitment to the involvement of people with disability in public policy and public life,” Minister Shorten said.

“She is a seasoned advocate, communications expert, and NDIS specialist living in regional New South Wales– making her perfect for a role advising Disability Ministers on reform implementation”.

“Dougie has more than 30 years’ experience in disability advocacy, disability advice and service delivery in Scotland and Australia, including as a Panel Member of the Independent Review into the NDIS. His experience on official advisory bodies for both the ACT and NSW state government Disability Ministers’ hold in him in good stead for this role.”

Minister Shorten said he was very pleased to be able to appoint highly accomplished people with disability to these key roles and looked forward to the additional committee members being appointed shortly.

The committee will provide independent advice to the Minister for the NDIS and Disability Ministers from people with disability on the implementation of NDIS reforms, including on policy, process, timing, and community views. It will also formally report to the Disability Reform Ministerial Council each six-months on implementation progress and risks, including the approach to inclusion of and accountability to people with disability.

“People with disability have said they want to be heard on the NDIS. This committee is delivering on that by representing the voices of the sector. As we implement reforms to the NDIS, which came into effect last October to get the Scheme back on track and deliver the best outcomes and experience for participants, the Committee will play an important role in ensuring accountability and transparency to the disability community,” Minister Shorten said.

El Gibbs and Dougie Herd will lead the committee as the inaugural co-chairs from January 2025 for a term of 2.5 years. They will be supported by eight additional members from states and territories and three additional members appointed through an EOI process (thirteen members in total).

The committee will play a crucial role in bringing together the different and diverse voices of people with disability, to Disability Ministers. It provides a voice of the disability community directly to the Disability Reform Ministerial Council during a period of critical changes to the NDIS. This ensures that the ensure the voices of people with disability are heard at the highest NDIS governance level throughout the implementation of the reforms.

The Terms of Reference for the committee are currently being finalised and will be published on the DSS Engage website shortly. The EOI process will begin once the Terms of Reference have been finalised. Further information on the EOI will be provided on the DSS Engage website.

The committee will operate for five years. The inaugural appointments will be for 2.5 years. All appointments to the committee are made on an individual-basis (distinct from any other employment or appointments they hold).

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