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On 13 August the NDIA released the fourth Quarterly Report for financial year 2017-18. The Quarterly Report shows some encouraging results for people with disability in Australia, their families and carers. In particular, this Quarterly Report indicates that at the same time as the NDIS continues to roll out and grow, it also continues to improve in the experience participants have, and the outcomes they report.

183,965 Australians are now receiving supports through the NDIS – a 13 per cent increase on Quarter 3, and double the number of participants at 30 June 2017. The number of providers has also doubled – to 16,775.

Almost one in three of these participants had never received disability support from government before, and NDIS participants are from an increasingly diverse background, reflecting the Scheme's continued rollout to more people and communities across Australia.

While these are expected milestones in the Scheme's trajectory, they are also worth celebrating. The rollout of the NDIS – particularly to people who have never before received supports – and the growth of a market that enables choice and control are significant achievements for people with disability in Australia.

While the NDIS is still in transition, we know that certain challenges remain. The NDIS needs to be more consistent, timely, and simple to navigate. Channels of communication need to be more intuitive and accessible. And the areas where the NDIS and other service systems like health, justice and mental health interact must be clearer as the Agency and Scheme mature through the remainder of Transition. These are priorities for the Agency, as outlined in our [Corporate Plan 2018-2022](#).

The Agency is committed to learning from experiences in trial and transition, and delivering improvements that will make a real difference to the Scheme in terms of peoples' experiences and outcomes. The NDIA and our Partners in the Community have been working hard to implement improvements to address these challenges.

It is promising to see initial outcomes of this hard work reflected in the Quarterly Report. For example;

- Participant satisfaction with the planning experience increased from 84 to 88 per cent

- Of parents and carers of pre-school age participants, 91 per cent surveyed said the NDIS has helped with their child's development
- 95 per cent of participants surveyed said their planner had listened to them, and they had enough time to tell their story
- 71 per cent said the NDIS had helped them with daily living
- Providers also had a better experience with the Scheme this quarter, with complaints going down from 6.5 per cent to 4.8 and the Agency making significant progress in engaging providers to work through payment and registration issues.

There is more work to be done to roll out the Scheme and continuously improve, but the results this quarter are encouraging.

Functional design

Part of that continuous improvement applies to the NDIA itself. We must make sure we as an organisation are in the best possible position to roll out and continuously improve the Scheme through the remainder of transition.

That is why, as [I indicated in May](#), the Agency is making some changes to the way we operate so we can meet the Scheme's emerging and growing needs.

As part of this work, the NDIA has aligned similar responsibilities and enabling functions. This will mean the whole Agency is positioned to focus on delivering an excellent service to participants, families, carers and providers, and constantly improving the NDIS experience.

The new [Agency structure](#) is expected to take effect on 3 September 2018. It expands the previous senior management model to ensure clear management and guidance in each state and territory as the Scheme grows, and as we pilot and roll out national improvements.

The Agency is committed to providing people with disability across Australia with a quality and consistent experience, regardless of where they live. That is why there will be a dedicated local leader in all eight states and territories.

In addition to local leadership in each state and territory, this model introduces senior roles focused on:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access and Service Innovation;
- the NDIA Rural and Remote Service and Strategy;
- Complex Support Needs, and;
- Early Childhood Services and support.

These changes to the NDIA's operating principles are based on lessons learnt through trial, transition, and extensive engagement and reflection through the Pathways reform work.

The Agency's new operating structure will help enable us achieve our mission of making the difference so people with disability have choice and control over their lives.

Executive leadership engagement

The NDIA Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meet once a month, quite often in a new location across Australia. Wherever possible, we have taken this informal opportunity to meet with staff, partners, providers and participants, and hear their experiences of the Scheme.

This week, we set aside the second day of our August meeting to meet with providers and sector stakeholders in Canberra. Members of ELT had the chance to meet with [Cerebral Palsy Alliance](#), who shared their experiences with the NDIS from an established provider's perspective. They shared some of the opportunities they have been able to take under the Scheme, as well as some of the unexpected and more challenging hurdles in transitioning to the NDIS environment. With the Agency's Market Enablement Framework in its final stages of development, this was timely and valuable feedback.

The leadership team also met with Christina Ryan, the founder of [Disability Leadership Institute](#). Describing herself as 'the gardener of leaders', Christina shared her own valuable experiences and insights about developing, supporting and promoting leaders with disability. The NDIA strives to be a model employer for disability, and while we exceed public service levels of employment of people with disability, there is always more than can be done.

We as the Executive Leadership of the NDIA are both privileged to be able to meet with people so invested in the Scheme's success, and committed to continuing to do so regularly. This week's ELT meeting in Canberra was informative, and energising.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support and involvement in the Scheme. I and the team look forward to the month ahead.

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