NDIS data shows one-in-three participants are accessing disability supports for the first time

15 February 2019

The latest quarterly data for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) released today shows that close to one in three people entering the scheme are receiving disability supports for the first time.

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher, and Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, Sarah Henderson, jointly released the COAG NDIS Quarterly Report for 1 October 2018 – 31 December 2018 today.

“The NDIS is dramatically changing the lives of people with disability and these figures dramatically underline that,” Mr Fletcher said.

“The fact that as of the end of 2018, some 73,956 participants entering the scheme had never received disability supports before demonstrates the NDIS is simply a better way of providing support for Australians with a disability, their families and carers.”

Mr Fletcher said the Federal Government has focussed on practical and tangible improvements to the NDIS with participants at the centre of all policy.

“For example, participants are now benefiting from significantly improved service levels via the NDIS Contact Centre following the engagement of Serco to operate the NDIS call centre in June 2018.

“The average phone call answer speed is now 28 seconds, versus 4 minutes 16 seconds previously.

“Rates of people hanging up have decreased from 17.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent and e-mail resolution for the first response has risen from 70 per cent to 80 per cent “

Assistant Minister Henderson said it is encouraging to see NDIS reforms starting to have an impact on how people with a disability are interacting with the Scheme.

Reforms to improve participants’ experiences include face-to-face planning (where preferred), easier to read plans and improved training for Agency staff.

In recent months, the Government has also announced a psychosocial disabilities stream, with specialised planners and closer linkages with mental health services; better planning for NDIS participants with complex needs; and improved processes to access Specialist Disability Accommodation.

“Of the participants surveyed this quarter, 93 per cent felt their planner listened to them, 90 per cent considered that they had enough time to tell their story, and 89 per cent reported their planning meeting to have gone well,” Ms Henderson said.

“The social and economic opportunities being delivered through the NDIS are also starting to appear with participation in the community and social activities shown to be increasing the more time participants have spent in the Scheme.”

After two years in the NDIS, participants aged 15-24 years increased their involvement in the community and social activities from the 32 per cent to 43 per cent – two percentage points in excess of the 2018-19 target of 41 per cent.

For participants 25 years and over, there was a 10 per cent increase in participation in community and social activities, from 37 per cent to 47 per cent – six percentage points in excess of the 2018-19 target of 41 per cent.

Mr Fletcher said the disability supports provider market continues to expand, with a six per cent growth on last quarter to a total of 19,075 providers across Australia as at 31 December 2018.

“The highest level of growth in active providers was in Specialist Disability Accommodation (22 per cent increase) and Innovative Community Participation (19 per cent increase),” Mr Fletcher said.

Participant satisfaction with the Scheme remains high with 84 per cent of participants rating their experience with NDIS as either ‘Very good’ or ‘Good’.

The NDIS participant satisfaction rate has remained consistent since quarterly survey reporting began in Q3 of 2014-15, with an average participant satisfaction rate of 90 per cent. The December data also shows a decrease in the number of complaints overall.

The report shows the NDIS continues to be delivered within budget, and is projected to remain within budget for the financial year.

The COAG NDIS Quarterly Report for 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2018 is now available.

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