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18 July Update

Welcome to this latest, and rather special edition of my regular update on the progress of the NDIS – the five year anniversary edition.

Five Year Anniversary of the NDIS

1 July marked a special occasion for the NDIS; five years ago, the first four NDIS trial sites had just opened their doors to welcome people with disability to this world-leading National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

This is an important opportunity to reflect on what the NDIS has achieved in the last five years. The Scheme now supports over 160,000 people through their NDIS plan and the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) pathway. Even more people are connecting with services and communities through Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grants. There are now over 14,000 providers registered to support NDIS participants in achieving their goals.

As I frequently communicate to our staff and partners: we are in a unique position in the history of the Scheme. We have achieved a huge amount in the last five years, and we have a lot left to do through the remainder of Transition. I am proud of the work we are doing to implement lessons learned so far, so that we can deliver a better, more consistent experience now and in the future.

Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia Transition Updates

We are also at the beginning of transition for new NDIS participants in Western Australia (WA). The NDIS is now available to people with disability in WA who did not enter the state-administered WA NDIS, depending on where they live. Details of transition are available the [Western Australia transition page](#).

Community organisations have now been invited to partner with the NDIA to support delivery of the Scheme in WA. These organisations – our Partners in the Community (PITC) – help roll out the NDIS on the ground by delivering Local Area Coordination (LAC) and Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) services in local communities.

The Agency's PITC program engages experienced and qualified organisations who know and understand local communities and their needs – particularly those of people with disability in local communities. In WA, this approach will especially seek an organisation(s) that understand the requirements of delivering the NDIS in regional and rural communities.

For further information and updates visit the NDIS website Grants page to register on [GrantConnect](#). An industry briefing will be held in Perth in July and a script will be released on the NDIS website after the briefing.

All enquiries relating to the PITC Program WA Grant Round should be directed to PITCGrants@ndis.gov.au. Answers will be published on GrantConnect.

New South Wales and South Australia have also transitioned out of providing disability supports. As the NDIA has previously communicated, the SA Government has agreed to continue providing support to existing clients until they receive their NDIS plan. We have learnt a lot through the processes involved with these first states fully transitioning out of providing disability supports. Those lessons will provide the foundation for our approach as other states and territories reach full scheme.

Autism Advisory Group

Last month, Minister for Social Services, the Hon Dan Tehan MP announced the establishment of an Autism Advisory Group to provide advice and feedback to the NDIA.

The Autism Cooperative Research Centre (Autism CRC), Amaze, Autistic Self- Advocacy Network - Australia and New Zealand (ASAN), Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorder (AABASD) and the Australian Autism Alliance are members of the Autism Advisory Group. As part of this membership, the Autism Advisory Group has representation from the autistic community.

This development reflects the Agency's utmost commitment to working with key organisations and stakeholders who support and represent people with autism. The NDIA continues to work closely with key stakeholders in the Autism sector. The Agency's relationship with this group will strengthen that ongoing engagement, and ensure the delivery of a Scheme that supports people with autism to choose and achieve their goals.

Establishing this Group is also consistent with the Government's commitment to taking an approach to issues relating to Autism and the NDIS that is collaborative and evidence-based.

The Autism Advisory Group is expected to discuss and work collaboratively with the NDIA on a range of issues. The aim of this discussion and engagement is to clarify how the Scheme can best support people with autism. More detail about these issues is contained in the [Minister's Media Release](#)

Independent Pricing Review

July also marks the Agency beginning to implement a range of measures to address the Independent Pricing Review (IPR) recommendations.

Minister Tehan [announced the first round of changes](#) that will give providers immediate support to transition to the NDIS, and make sure participants can find the services they need to implement their plan.

This round of implementation addresses things like regional travel costs, temporary support for overheads, cancellation policies for core supports, and more flexible group community participation supports.

To minimise the impact on providers, automatic adjustments were made to participant service bookings and budgets to reflect these changes.

More detail is available on the [IPR page](#) of the NDIS website, including a table that provides a breakdown of each recommendation and its timetable for implementation.

Looking forward

On this, the fifth anniversary of the NDIS, and coming up to my own one year anniversary with the Scheme, I am heartened by the progress the NDIS has made and what has been achieved so far for people with disability in Australia.

I am also encouraged every day by our staff and Partners' commitment to delivering a world-leading NDIS. There is no denying the passion of our people, and their dedication to supporting people with disability to choose and achieve their goals. Now and in the near future, the NDIA is undertaking a range of work to improve our internal processes, organisational design and culture.

We remain focused on one thing: delivering a quality and consistent NDIS experience for participants and providers. As an Agency we want to make sure we are in the best possible position to meet the challenge ahead. I am looking forward to things like our staff putting the new NDIA Values into action to guide us through that challenge.

We often repeat the aim of the Scheme: building a world-leading NDIS that supports people with disability to choose and achieve their goals in more inclusive workplaces and communities. That last part is so important. The NDIS plays a role in raising the inclusion and accessibility of Australia, through Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grants.

ILC is all about connecting all people with disability with their communities, services and information they need to participate in Australian society – whether it be socially, in the workplace, or a religious, community or recreation group. It does this through grants for things like [reverse inclusion basketball](#), where people of all ages, genders, abilities and social backgrounds are encouraged to come together on an even playing field – or court, as the case may be. With \$56 million in ILC grants announced this year, I know we will be seeing more and more great initiatives designed by and for people with disability to connect with their communities.

Finally, I want to say thank you to all in the disability sector who have been actively and productively engaging with the NDIA, particularly in recent weeks and months. We are absolutely committed to working with the sector to deliver a quality and consistent NDIS that delivers positive outcomes for people with disability. Your ongoing engagement in representing the voices and experiences of people with disability from a variety of backgrounds is invaluable in achieving this.

Thank you for your support, as always.

Rob.

[Transcript for '5 years of the NDIS - Message from the CEO'](#)

27 July 2018 update

Welcome to the latest of these updates. This follows the last update quite quickly, as July has been a month of many significant milestones and achievements for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

This financial year 2018-19, is going to be a year of many milestones, as the NDIS continues to roll out to more locations across the country. I look forward to learning about the outcomes and experiences of these participants through the latest round of [participant surveys](#). These surveys help the Agency identify what supports are effective for participants, and ways the NDIS experience can be improved for all.

On Friday 20 July 2018, NDIA and Partners in the Community senior leaders came together in Melbourne for the first NDIS Town Hall. One primary purpose of this Town Hall was to share with NDIS Leadership the refreshed NDIA Corporate Plan 2018-2022.

I am pleased to now share [the Corporate Plan here](#).

It is often said the Agency and our Partners in the Community are rolling out a world-first Scheme with no template to follow. However, we do have a roadmap – the Corporate Plan. The four aspirations contained in this Corporate Plan together make up what the Scheme will look like and achieve for people with disability at full Scheme.

- A quality experience and outcomes for participants.
- A growing and competitive market with innovative supports.
- A financially sustainable Scheme.
- A high-performing NDIA.

The Town Hall event was an opportunity for NDIS leadership to plan for the remainder of transition, and how the Agency and Partners in the Community will bring the new NDIA Values and Corporate Plan to life to deliver on our purpose: making the difference so that people with disability have choice and control over their lives.

As I said to NDIA and Partner staff following the Town Hall, there are two primary reasons it was important the Agency hold such an event at this point in time.

First, in an organisation as large as the NDIA and our Partners in the Community, it is important we come together to share messages in a way that are consistent, meaningful and lasting, particularly when it comes to topics like leadership and the Corporate Plan. Leaders having a shared understanding of the work ahead is crucial if we are to successfully deliver what is an exceptional piece of social infrastructure that people with disability fought long and hard for.

Second, we are at the beginning of a new year of transition, and what will be the largest year in terms of the pace and scale of NDIS rollout. It is important to take this moment to reflect on what has already been achieved, and what we have left to do. It is also a good opportunity for us to take the refreshed NDIA values and Corporate Plan as a chance to also refresh ourselves, our ways of working and our mindsets.

NDIA organisational structure and local leadership

The NDIA is in the process of finalising work to nationally realign Agency functions and roles, and to clarify reporting processes and operating principles. As part of this work, the NDIA is moving to a national service delivery model to support greater consistency in how we deliver planning across the country. In this model, each region will continue to have a local senior leader on the ground.

We are also creating a number of new senior leadership positions and teams to support a range of groups, functions and matters across the Scheme, including:

- people with disability in rural and remote locations;
- early childhood services;
- provider and stakeholder engagement, and;
- an expanding team of specialist advisors.

This organisational structure will mean the NDIA is able to support its ongoing commitment to delivering a quality and consistent experience for NDIS participants, no matter where they live.

Fraud Taskforce

The Commonwealth Government [has announced a new NDIS Fraud Taskforce \(the Taskforce\)](#) to address potential and alleged cases of fraud against the NDIS.

The Taskforce will be a joint operation between the NDIA, Department of Human Services (DHS) and Australian Federal Police (AFP), and will work to tackle cases of fraud against the NDIS through information sharing, analytics and combined law enforcement efforts.

Establishing this taskforce drives home the warning to those that may try to commit fraud against the NDIS — the NDIA and Federal Government will not allow the misuse of funds intended to support people with disability.

It is important to note the establishment of this taskforce is not in response to any particular case or set of cases, nor is it an attempt to monitor how participants use their plans. Rather, it is a recognition of the Scheme's status as a major Government financial investment. The Taskforce will target serious, organised crime against the NDIS.

All reports of suspected fraud are taken seriously. Anyone with information about suspected fraud involving the NDIS should contact the Fraud Hotline on 1800 650 717. This includes NDIA and Partner staff.

Portal enhancements

More portal enhancements to the NDIS participant and provider portals went live as part of the ongoing Pathways review. Among the changes, participants and providers have been given more control and visibility over service bookings.

Autism Advisory Group

On 6 July 2018, the recently established [Autism Advisory Group](#) met for the first time. The Group was established earlier this month as part of the NDIA and Federal Government's ongoing commitment to engage with organisations representing people with autism as the

NDIS continues to roll out.

The Group will provide advice and feedback to the NDIA and strengthen the Agency's relationships with the sector, ensuring the delivery of a Scheme that supports people with autism to have choice and control over their lives.

This first meeting covered a range of topics and clarified the group's priority areas of work. These include strengthening training for NDIA and Partner staff and clarifying the role of the NDIS alongside the National Disability Strategy (NDS) in supporting people with autism to access services, supports, and get involved in the community.

The NDIA's relationship with this new group and this first meeting are an encouraging next step in the Agency's ongoing relationship with the sector and groups representing people with autism. The Autism Advisory Group will meet again soon, and details will be released closer to the date.

In other news

On Thursday 2 August between 11am and 12pm AEST the NDIA will be hosting a webinar on self-managing NDIS plans. This will be a great opportunity to get a lot of information and insights about what self-managing your NDIS plan means, how to do it, and your responsibilities if you choose to manage your own funds. Participants, families and carers are welcome to join the webinar and get involved by asking questions through the live chat.

[Nominations are open](#) for the annual Human Rights Awards. Many people working in the disability sector will know someone who deserves a nomination for this prestigious award. It recognises the hard work being done in communities across Australia every day to further human rights and freedoms in Australia. I encourage you to have a think about who in the sector deserves a nomination and get your vote in by 5 August 2018.

As always, thank you all for your ongoing support and input to the delivery of the NDIS.

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