New NDIS arrangements in remote Western Australia helping Australians access disability supports

7 April 2019

New arrangements between the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS's) in remote areas of Western Australia will help improve people's access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher, today announced an investment of $4.6 million for AMS's in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Goldfields to deliver two programs to improve awareness and access to the NDIS while generating employment opportunities in these regions.

Minister Fletcher said the Remote Community Connectors Program will see people from remote communities employed by local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to promote understanding and awareness of the NDIS.

"They will also link people to access, planning and implementation pathways," Mr Fletcher said.

"The Evidence, Access and Coordination of Planning Program will enable AMS's to recruit Evidence and Access Coordinators in remote clinics to facilitate the eligibility testing and access procedures of the NDIS.

"The coordinators will also assist with organising NDIS planning meetings in remote areas.

Minister Fletcher said AMS's are well placed to deliver these programs given the centrality of Aboriginal community members to their governance and direction.

"AMS's are already providing health and multidisciplinary programs in some of the world's remotest areas via an existing service delivery footprint that includes clinical expertise as well as mainstream and community networks," Mr Fletcher said.

"Remote Community Connectors will be employed by AMS's to ensure culturally appropriate connection between the NDIA and community, helping to enhance engagement and communication with some of the nation's most isolated communities.

"The Evidence, Access and Coordination of Planning Program will also be rolled out in these remote regions.

"This will assist people in testing their access to the Scheme and, if eligible, support them to build a plan with the NDIA.

"The NDIS is an opportunity for all Australians, significantly increasing the funding available for disability services, and putting choice and control over how those services are delivered into the hands of people with disability.

"The social and economic opportunities being delivered through the NDIS are continuing to increase with the disability provider market expanding at a rate of six per cent quarter on quarter across

Australia, as at 31 December 2018.”

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, Sarah Henderson, said these new arrangements were a positive outcome for regional and remote participants.

“Western Australia is the world’s largest state and is home to some of the world’s most remote communities,” Ms Henderson said.

“Having vital services available locally and support on hand to assist with cultural and linguistic challenges, participants will be further encouraged to seek the information and direction they need to secure appropriate supports and services.

“Whilst these are great achievements, the Australian Government will continue to improve experience and outcomes for participants right across Australia.”

The NDIS has been rolling out progressively across Australia, and formally began its roll out in WA on 1 July 2018.

As of December 2018, 9,607 people living in Western Australia were benefitting from the NDIS, with 3,227 accessing support for the first time.

At the completion of the rollout of the NDIS in WA, 39,000 people are expected to be accessing supports.

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