15 January 2014

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is breaking new ground in support of children with disability living in remote areas.

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) chief executive David Bowen said a report by the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC), released today, would assist Indigenous Australians in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands.

APY Lands has a population of about 2500 and spans more than 103,000km from north-west South Australia into Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

"The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), which administers the NDIS, has been working with Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and South Australia to identify and assist people with disability," Mr Bowen said.

"This report is part of that work and the Agency has already accepted many of its recommendations," he said.

"We want to make sure children in this area are able to benefit from the NDIS through our South Australian trial site while being respectful of their culture.

"Learning about the needs of local people with disability, cultural differences and traditions on child raising is vital in making the NDIS the best it can be in the APY Lands and other remote and isolated communities.

"The input from the Women's Council has been invaluable."

The NDIA is already acting on several NPYWC recommendations including

- funding for a local area coordinator based with the Women's Council
- clear and simple participant plans which specify services and equipment rather than funding amounts, and
- working with service providers to identify and enhance available supports for families

"Other suggestions will also be taken into account and the NDIA looks forward to working with the NPYWC and Indigenous communities across Australia to ensure the best outcomes for people with disability," Mr Bowen said.

"I encourage everyone to read the final report of the NPY Women's Council. It is a carefully-considered insight by people who live within some of our most remote communities," he said.

"The vision of the NDIS is to maximise independence and participation in their communities. "The NDIS is still in the trial period and we are learning and building by ensuring people with disability are at the centre of the scheme."

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