6 April 2016

The NDIS will transform access to affordable, stable and accessible housing by giving people with disability real choice and control around where they live and who they live with - a basic human right for all.

More than 500 people will gather in Sydney today to learn about a range of new and innovative housing options and support models for people with disability at the first National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Housing Innovation Showcase.

Speaking at the event will be Age and Disability Discrimination Commissioner, The Hon Susan Ryan AO, National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Chief Executive Officer, David Bowen and NDIA Board and Principal Member of the NDIA Independent Advisory Council, Rhonda Galbally.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability recognises, “the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others.”

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Chief Executive Officer, David Bowen, said the UN’s convention went to the very heart of what the NDIS was all about.

“The NDIS exists to support people with disability to live an ordinary life, providing them with choice and control over the supports they need. Affordable, stable and accessible housing is integral to that,” Mr Bowen said.

“The current system of accommodation support is failing people with disability in Australia. There are thousands of Australians with disability who are forced to live in unsuitable housing because there are no alternatives. Often that means accommodation where people are segregated from the broader community.

“The NDIS will offer many people with disability their first opportunity to plan to live more independently and to think about different housing options. Today’s showcase aims to promote human rights for all Australians and inspire and inform the future of disability accommodation in Australia.”

Age and Disability Discrimination Commissioner, The Hon Susan Ryan AO said in addition to recognising of the diversity among people with disability, we all needed to promote and protect the right of people with disability to exercise choice in the type of housing and accommodation available to them.

“Indeed in 2013, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Committee in their concluding observations on Australia’s report on our implementation of the Disability Convention, recommended that Australia take action to ensure that people with disability have free choice of where they live and who they live with,” Ms Ryan said.

Steve Anthony and his wife, along with two other families, established a parent-run cooperative (PaRA - Parent Assisted Residential Accommodation) in 2010 to manage a house where Steve's son and two other young men with autism live in Sydney's inner north.

Mr Anthony said many parents of adult children with severe disabilities were unable to support their children at home all the time, but they still wanted to be actively involved in their lives.

"Small co-operatives are an ideal structure for families to govern the operation of supported accommodation in the best interests of their children and at substantial financial saving to government," Mr Anthony said.

PaRA is one of 10 organisations from around Australia presenting at the showcase, along with Achieve Australia, the Summer Foundation and Project Independence. There will also be a small trade show with exhibitions from the presenters.

Today's showcase is the first in a series to be held around the country later this year. It us an opportunity for people with disability, their families and carers, as well as current and potential providers, to hear from existing not-for-profits, parent cooperatives, housing organisations and support providers about a range of creative housing approaches in the lead up to the national roll-out of the NDIS from 1 July.

For more information about upcoming events, visit the events page on the NDIS website.

NDIA Media contact: 0477 703 960 or media@ndis.gov.au

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