2 July 2020

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Stuart Robert today announced the expansion of the National Community Connector Program (NCCP), after committing to a $20 million expansion in November last year.

Minister Robert made the announcement in Townsville where he was joined by Federal Member for Herbert, Phillip Thompson OAM MP and Townsville NDIS Partner in the Community, Feros Care.

The announcement today builds upon the existing community connectors in remote settings and will ensure that better support Australians with disability in rural and urban locations from four specific population groups to access the NDIS, including: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, People experiencing psychosocial disabilities; and Ageing parents or carers of people with disability.

Minister Robert said the NCCP will expand and build on the existing Community Connector programs.

‘As trusted community members, Community Connectors will play a critical role in reaching out to people with disability in these harder-to-reach communities, increasing awareness of the NDIS and providing support for people to access the Scheme,’ Mr Robert said.

‘We made a promise to deliver this program nationally, and as of today, we are now delivering the expanded National Community Connector program in urban and regional locations across Australia.

‘These organisations have been selected to deliver the Community Connector program because of their bonds across these communities and specialised understanding of the issues and support needed.’

The organisations selected to deliver the NCCP in partnership with NDIS Partners in the Community, are:

- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- Mental Health Australia
- First Peoples Disability Network.

Together with the Department of Social Services and Carers Australia, the NDIA has also developed a virtual Community Connector support service and referral pathway for ageing parents and carers of people with disability.

As the NDIA and disability organisations continue to operate within the coronavirus restrictions with face-to-face outreach not immediately available, Partners and Community Connectors will use their

networks to reach out and support potential or existing participants, through initiatives such as in-language webinars and radio programs, dedicated telephone services and online support programs.

‘It is important that we continue to work within the guidelines to minimise the impact of the coronavirus, and these organisations have specific plans in place to continue to support and connect with people with disability in our communities throughout the pandemic,’ Mr Robert said.

The Federal Member for Herbert, Phillip Thompson welcomed the commitment to deliver tailored support to people with disability from across the Townsville community.

‘Townsville is a strong community with resilient people - this program will help people across our community fulfil their full potential and I am proud to be delivering more resources for those who need it’ he said.

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