Delivering the NDIS: maturing scheme continues to deliver during COVID-19

17 February 2021

New data has revealed how the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) continued to support more Australians during 2020—a year full of unprecedented challenges from the devastating bushfires in January through to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not only did the NDIS need to adapt to these challenges, it needed to support the NDIS community through a very stressful time. It achieved this by adding or refining supports available to participants and providers, improving outcomes for participants and growing the Scheme.

The data, drawn from the latest NDIS Quarterly Report (Q2 2020-21) released today, demonstrates not only has the NDIS adapted, it continued to deliver for people with disability.

With the complete picture for 2020 now available, the data shows:

- we welcomed an average of 24,800 people into the NDIS each quarter in 2020.
- we are now supporting over 430,000 people with disability, an increase of more than 93,500 participants since December 2019.
- the number of younger people in residential aged care has reduced by 22 per cent over the past two years.
- 100 per cent of access decisions are made within the 21 day timeframe. In June 2019 we were taking an average of 42 days to make an access decision.
- 98 per cent of first plans are approved for participants aged 0-6 within 90 days, compared to 85 per cent a year ago. For participants aged 7 and above, 92 per cent of first plans are approved within the 70 day timeframe, compared to 64 per cent a year ago.
- review timeframes have significantly improved with 100 per cent of decisions to undertake a participant requested review made within 21 days, compared to a year ago where 56 per cent of decisions to undertake a participant requested review were made within 21 days.
- on 1 July 2020, the NDIS was available nation-wide. After seven years of hard work, the Scheme became available to all Australians, a wonderful milestone to reach.

Equally critical to supporting participants achieve better outcomes is the continued development of an innovative, engaged provider sector.

In a recent provider sentiment survey, nearly 60 per cent of providers said they felt optimistic about the health of the NDIS market, an increase of 12 per cent from the previous survey in September 2019.

The provider market grew in 2020:

- providers were paid over $20 billion to deliver participant supports throughout 2020.
- averaged payments per participant increased by 9 per cent in 2020, from $47,800 to $52,300.
- registered providers grew by more than 12 per cent over the past year.

In 2020, the Scheme supported providers by:

- running thin market trials in various locations throughout Australia, to improve our approach to monitoring and identifying market challenges.
- releasing detailed Specialist Disability Accommodation data.

The report also shows the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) continued to deliver on its Participant Service Guarantee – which sets out clear timeframes participants can expect from the NDIA – meaning people with disability are enjoying faster access to supports.

Minister Robert said he was incredibly proud of how the NDIA has risen to the challenge of continuing to improve the Scheme whilst adapting to what was an incredibly challenging year.

‘We will all remember 2020 as a year of challenge and change,’ Minister Robert said.

‘For the NDIS, it was the year of learning to adapt to an ever-changing environment whilst continuing to grow, supporting more Australians with disability than ever before.

‘A key part of supporting growth was drawing on the strengths of the Scheme and actively looking at where it needed to improve. In 2020, we made extra time to listen to our participants and providers, consider our data and look for ways to make the Scheme better.

‘The NDIS has now reached a significant stage, with a sharper focus on ensuring a better experience for every participant.

‘Despite the challenges of COVID-19, we forged ahead to make the Scheme simpler, fairer and more consistent. The Scheme is now rolled out across Australia, and, after seven and a half years, we have a better understanding of how the Scheme is working and where improvements can be made. We are now focused on ensuring the Scheme delivers a consistent and high quality experience for all participants.’

Read the latest Quarterly Report.

Read the Minister's media release .

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