12 December 2022

Minister for the NDIS and Government Services, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, has today announced that almost 60 per cent of NDIS legacy appeal cases inherited from the former Liberal-National Government have now been cleared through overhauled dispute resolution processes.

This includes an Independent Expert Review (IER) Pathway pilot that gives effect to the Government's 2022 Election Commitment to help resolve disputes arising from NDIS decisions in a forum that is accessible, fair and efficient.

The new process was also designed to reduce the number of appeals that progress to hearing in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

"The radical reduction in legacy cases is one of the most positive achievements since becoming Minister for the NDIS," Minister Shorten said.

The Expert Panel, overseen by an Independent Oversight Committee led by former Disability Discrimination Commissioner Dr Graeme Innes AM, will be expanded as part of Phase 2 of the IER pilot, with 16 new members joining the IER to support the resolution of more than 200 additional cases.

A Participant Support Hotline will provide independent advocacy and legal support for those who have cases being considered by the IER Panel.

"An example of the early success of the Expert Review pilot is Victorian NDIS participant Tammy, who was able to have a small number of vital supports added to her plan to help her manage cerebral palsy, instead of going through the AAT," Minister Shorten said.

"The progress of the Expert Review pilot means NDIS participants voices can be heard through a faster process when appealing an NDIA decision about their supports.

"Labor promised to get the NDIS back on track at the election and we are delivering on that promise."

Other achievements include:

- Faster hospital discharge: Reduced the average number of days NDIS-eligible people are stuck in hospital from 160 to 39 days. Around 300 people of the 1400 NDIS participants that were waiting in hospital beds are now in more appropriate housing.
- Put people with disability back at the centre: Installed the highest ever number of people with a disability to the NDIA Board, including Australian Paralympic legend and disability advocate Kurt Fearnley as the first Chair with a disability.
- Revitalised NDIA: Appointed seasoned public servant Rebecca Falkingham to lead the Agency, lifted the cap on staff and funded it into the future so staff can continue to support participants.

- NDIS Review: Launched an independent review led by a seven member panel with five people with lived experience to get the NDIS back on track and ensure the Scheme works effectively and sustainably so that future generations receive the benefit of the NDIS.
- NDIS Jobs Forum: Hosted 100 people from across Australia to ensure people with disability's voices were heard at the National Job Summit.
- Fraud Fusion Taskforce: Established a taskforce to strengthen fraud detection and better safeguard the NDIS from organised crime and other fraudsters.
- COVID-19 Support: Continued support for participants during COVID, including making air purifiers available to keep NDIS participants safe.

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