Media release from the Minister - Funding boost for co-design in the disability sector

13 January 2023

The NDIA is strengthening engagement with the disability community, providing an additional $1.4 million to Disability Representative and Carers Organisations (DRCOs) to support co-design activities, a total of $2.8 million over the past 12 months.

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, said engagement with DRCOs helps ensure the Scheme is fit for purpose and enables participants to live the life they choose.

“DRCOs hold invaluable expertise, trusted relationships with hundreds of thousands of people with disability, their families and carers, and a significant understanding of the key issues we need to tackle,” Minister Shorten said.

“Properly resourcing DRCOs provides broad benefit, including improving the ability to listen to diverse communities, foster open dialogue and provide regular opportunities to relay their expertise.

“We want co-design activities to be meaningful and grounded in knowledge held by the disability sector, to steer the Scheme to where we all want it to be.

"This significant support to further co-design activities continues the Australian Government’s commitment to putting people with disability at the centre of the Scheme.”

With this funding, DRCOs can continue to conduct focus groups to workshop ideas, engage the community and NDIS participants through surveys, workshops and one on one interviews to provide the NDIA with a deeper understanding of what is working, and what can be done better.

Dwayne Cranfield, CEO of National Ethnic Disability Alliance and Catherine McAlpine, CEO of Inclusion Australia say the funding shows the NDIA recognises the expertise of people with disability.

“The funding will enable DRCOs to capture all kinds of feedback from people with disability, and to amplify their voices so the Scheme is shaped by the people who rely on it,” Mr. Cranfield said.

“Here at Inclusion Australia, we welcome this co-design funding because that means people with intellectual disability have accessible resources and support to be able to fully participate in co-design,” Ms. Alpine said.

This funding also reflects DRCOs’ time and effort to engage in co-design, acknowledging DRCOs specialist knowledge and lived experience of disability.

The information DCROs gather in their own engagements with disability communities will be shared with the NDIA in monthly meetings.

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