Media release from the Minister - AMA finds hundreds of millions of dollars saved getting NDIS participants home from hospital

13 February 2023

Since being elected in May 2022, the Albanese Labor Government has saved the state health system hundreds of millions of dollars by reducing the number of days NDIS participants stay in hospital when medically ready for discharge.

A new report from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) shows the Labor Government has already saved state health systems up to $548.8 million, directly, from an operational plan to cut the days NDIS eligible patients are waiting to go home or into suitable accommodation.

Minister for the NDIS and Government Services, Bill Shorten MP, has worked closely with state and territory disability ministers on the operational plan designed to slash the times people on, or eligible for, the NDIS are stuck in hospital when they could be home.

The AMA praised the work being done, saying continuing to reduce hospital exit block, as the report described the issue, could save the Australian health system up to $1.32 billion annually.

In just five months to November 2022, the AMA report noted the average wait days have been slashed nationally from 160 to 33 days, saving between $205 million and $548.8 million since the operational plan was put in place between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments.

The report found exit blocks diminished available beds for patients who needed to be in hospital, lengthened ambulance ramping times, and increased waiting times for emergency department services and essential elective surgery.

“Hospital bed exit blocks are an avoidable cost to the state health system, and since we were elected in May the Albanese Government hasn’t wasted a moment to reduce this waste,” Minister Shorten said.

“Languishing in the wrong setting is not only detrimental to the wellbeing of the person with disability but is a shocking cost for state hospital systems. There are no winners.

“Before the May election, the average waiting time of NDIS participants medically fit for discharge but stuck in hospital was 160 nights, costing around $1,107 to $2,963 per day.

“In the first eight months of the Albanese Government, I’ve focussed on working with the states and territories, and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), to ensure safe and timely hospital discharge for NDIS participants – already we’re seeing results.

“The backlog of home and living decisions has also been cleared. Decisions that previously took an average of 60+ days, now take 5-7 days.”

“Labor said we’d get the NDIS back on track after almost a decade of mismanagement and chaos and we’re getting it done.

“This is responsible stewardship of the NDIS in action.”

Read the full report here .

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