7 December 2023

The final report of the Independent NDIS Review (the Review) has been released today at 9am.

The report maps out the Review's recommendations to help restore trust, ensure the Scheme's sustainability, and deliver a better NDIS experience for participants.

The report includes 26 recommendations and 139 supporting actions.

Led by co-chairs Prof. Bruce Bonyhady AM and Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM, the Review panel examined the design, operations, and sustainability of the NDIS.

The independent NDIS Review Panel travelled to every state and territory – including regional and remote communities – heard directly from more than 10,000 Australians, worked with disability organisations to reach out and listened to more than 1,000 people with disability and their families, recorded more than 2,000 personal stories, and received almost 4,000 submissions.

It is among the most comprehensive and accessible Commonwealth reviews in history.

As an initial response to key aspects of the report, the Australian Government and states and territories yesterday committed to reforming the NDIS to make disability supports fairer for all Australians.

Yesterday's historic meeting of National Cabinet committed to securing the future of the NDIS for generations of Australians.

National Cabinet agreed to implement legislative changes to the NDIS to improve the experience of participants and restore the original intent of the Scheme to support people with permanent and significant disability, within a broader ecosystem of supports.

National Cabinet also agreed to together design additional Foundational Supports to be jointly commissioned by the Commonwealth and the states.

The full Government response to the Review will be released in 2024.

Discussions with the disability community will continue over the coming months as we work together to make the positive changes needed for people with disability.

The Review's recommendations included:

- Legislation: The Review recommended a range of legislative reforms to return the scheme to its original intent and improve the experience of participants. This included legislation to improve eligibility and access, as well as an early intervention pathway for children.

- Foundational supports: The Review recommended disability specific supports that would be available to people with disability and, where appropriate, their families and carers. The Review said these supports should be available to all Australians with disability, whether they are on the NDIS or not. Foundational supports would interconnect with existing mainstream services like childcare and schools.
    - Early childhood intervention: The Review said there is not enough support for children in everyday settings, where they live, play and learn. It recommends children with disability and developmental concerns or delays are identified early, and get the support they need. This could include earlier checks and screening to pick up developmental concerns and provide support.
    - New approaches to psychosocial disability and mental health: The Review recommended a new, dedicated approach for people with psychosocial disability that better meets their episodic needs and is focused on personal recovery. It recommended that access to mental health services should be improved and there should be a strengthened interface between mental health systems and the NDIS.
- Service navigation: The Review recommended the introduction of navigators to help people with disability, find and access all services available to them across mainstream services, community supports, foundational supports and the NDIS.
- Fairer housing and living support: The Review recommended consistency should be introduced to housing and living support budgets to make it fairer for NDIS participants. The Review recommended a more flexible and innovative approach to housing supports to help people access solutions that suit them better.
- Registration: The Review recommended all providers should be enrolled or registered, with the level of regulatory requirement being determined by the risk and complexity of the different supports they provide.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for the NDIS and Government Services, Bill Shorten:

“I would like to sincerely thank every person who shared their stories with the NDIS Review, I want you to know that you’re the drivers of change.

“I would also like to thank the Review co-chairs Prof. Bruce Bonyhady AM and Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM, and the panel, which included Mr Kevin Cocks AM, Ms Judy Brewer AO, Dr Stephen P King, Mr Dougie Herd and Prof Kirsten Deane OAM.

“This is a significant moment in Australian history, particularly for people with disability and their families, and the disability sector. Our nation will reap the rewards of the Review’s work.

“The objectives of the Review were to restore trust, ensure sustainability and give participants a better experience and more control, by making the NDIS more about people and less about

bureaucracy through greater equity, transparency and consistency.

“National Cabinet yesterday agreed to deliver significant collaboration and investment to support all Australians with disability.

“The Albanese Government has made a commitment to humanise the Scheme and ensure every dollar goes to the participants for who it was intended.

“It is important that Australians understand changes are not going to happen overnight and any reforms adopted by the Albanese Government will be developed with the disability community to ensure a better NDIS.”

Access the full report and the supporting documents here. The Review’s recommendations and facts sheets are all published in Easy Read formats.

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