3 March 2024

Minister for the NDIS the Hon. Bill Shorten MP today announced Michael Phelan APM as the interim acting Commissioner of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission for a three-month term.

As the former head of the nation's top criminal research and intelligence agencies, Mr Phelan has proven experience to lead the fight against dodgy operators and improve safety for NDIS participants.

Minister Shorten said having someone of Mr Phelan's calibre in the top job at the NDIS watchdog sends a message to anyone thinking they can rip off the Scheme and vulnerable Australians.

"Michael has a distinguished career in crime fighting, from being the former chief executive officer of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, to the director of the Australian Institute of Criminology. He knows how to catch criminals, fight fraud and defend the NDIS. He is the right person for this crucial job.

"I want to make sure every NDIS dollar goes to the participants. Michael Phelan APM will be an excellent acting Commissioner to help make the Scheme safer for all participants and get the Scheme back on track."

The Australian Government has introduced a raft of measures to put participants at the heart of the NDIS, and ensure its sustainability for future generations of Australians. Measures include the Crack Down on Fraud Program, forming the Fraud Fusion Taskforce, the NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce, chaired by Ms Natalie Wade as well as strengthening the NDIS Commission's powers.

"Michael's appointment as acting Commissioner is another line of defence in the fight against unscrupulous operators trying to take advantage of the Scheme," Mr Shorten said.

"Participants and their families should be assured that the Government is investing in the Commission and its ability to safeguard all participants and prevent exploitation of the NDIS."

As the NDIS undergoes a period of landmark reform, Mr Phelan's experience as a top crime fighting police officer puts participant safety and provider regulation in the safest of hands.

The Government will conduct an open recruitment process to fill the Commissioner role on a long-term basis.

Minister Shorten said the Commission needs strong leadership as it continues to evolve and

strengthen.

“We are consulting people with disability and taking advice from all corners of the disability community on how together we can build a better NDIS disability watchdog.”

Mr Phelan takes on the acting Commissioner role from March 12, when the current Commissioner begins a period of leave.

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