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PARTICIPANTS AND PROVIDERS WORK WITH NDIS TO IMPROVE PROCESSES

Dear Participant,

The Board and Executive Management team of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) wish to provide information to the Scheme's existing and potential participants, their families, carers and providers regarding major work that is underway to deliver a significantly upgraded quality of participant and provider experience in a way that remains consistent with maintaining the Scheme's financial sustainability.

An improved participant and provider experience will be grounded in the NDIS's aspiration to facilitate improved economic and social outcomes for participants. As was always the original intent of the NDIS, better outcomes for participants, based on the Scheme's insurance approach are intended to produce a long term economic and social dividend for Australia. That was the vision on which the NDIS was founded. That is what the disability community supports. That is what we, our staff and community partners are committed to delivering.

Participants in the initial Trials, which started in 2013, are already reaping the benefits of their involvement with the NDIS. A survey of 23,400 NDIS participants, families and carers demonstrates these results. Participants who have been longer in the Scheme are becoming more independent; they are able to exercise greater choice and control; they are experiencing stronger social, educational and employment outcomes; children's development has improved; and students are more able to attend mainstream classes.

Notwithstanding these positive results, it is now well recognised that before the commencement of transition to full scheme in July 2016, the quality of the NDIA's internal preparation warranted significant improvement. The NDIA's processes and systems have not resulted in a participant and provider experience during Transition that is of the consistently high standards that the NDIA expects. While the need to improve processes is not entirely unexpected given the ground breaking nature of the reform, the NDIA recognises the important need to learn from these early experiences and improve and adapt its processes as quickly as possible. The Board, management and staff of the NDIA are unequivocally committed to delivering a much better experience for participants and providers based on an outcomes driven approach.



To that end, since early April 2017, the NDIA has been working individually and in workshops with more than 200 participants, providers, peak disability bodies and other stakeholders from all States and territories to identify what needs to improve and how that might occur. Productivity Commission submissions outlining improvement opportunities have also been recognised, as has feedback from the Independent Advisory Council and views expressed at the Joint Standing Committee.

From that process, 400 specific improvement ideas and 200 solution concepts have been generated. Detailed work is currently underway to incorporate participants' and providers' insights to ensure the NDIA delivers a high quality, outcomes focussed participant and provider experience that is simple, clear and accessible, at the same time as ensuring the Scheme's financial sustainability. While a new integrated end to end approach has yet to be finally tested with participants and providers, the proposal is likely to include a greater outcomes focus throughout a participant's life; more active involvement with communities; more face to face (rather than telephone) communications; fewer participant transfers; an easier to navigate portal; a more responsive call centre experience; and significantly improved interactions with providers and disability organisations. Having learned from the past, the final proposal will be tested with participants and providers before it goes live.

The NDIA is acting expeditiously to implement this revised and more integrated end to end approach for participants and providers. Many standalone improvements that are consistent with the proposed longer term approach will be put in place as soon as possible while we continue to bring new participants into the Scheme.

The NDIA is committed to getting the proposed approach right. As a result, full implementation, which will be dealt with as a matter of priority, may take somewhat longer because of the need to retrain staff; implement systems changes; and significantly improve communications.

The NDIA also wishes to assure participants, that despite misleading press reports, there is no policy directive to cut the amount of supports in plan packages. At all times the level of supports provided in a participant's plan will be based on what is determined reasonable and necessary under the NDIS Act.

During the interim period, until the full proposal can be implemented, the NDIA will work hard to actively engage with stakeholders and to provide information on progress. In turn, we ask for your ongoing goodwill and patience.

Yours sincerely



David Bowen
Chief Executive Officer
National Disability Insurance Agency

