

News release - Katrine Hildyard MP

South Australian disability sector calls on the Commonwealth to improve NDIS rollout

[Katrine Hildyard](#) January 15, 2018

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The State Government, leading disability providers and peak body National Disability Services are calling on the Federal Government to ensure a smooth transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme in South Australia.

The State Government and the disability sector are committed to the NDIS and will keep working to make this great reform deliver for people with disability. It will change thousands of South Australian's lives for the better.

To make the transition to the NDIS as successful as possible, we are calling on the Federal Government to keep its promises by:

- Appointing Local Area Coordinators as promised
- Fast-tracking improvements to the initial planning process and plan reviews
- Fixing payment delay issues that are leaving providers out of pocket
- Removing the arbitrary cap on National Disability Insurance Agency staff
- Guaranteeing provider of last resort funding arrangements and keeping South Australia's 24-hour phone line open
- Ensuring South Australia gets its fair share of NDIA resources and jobs
- Boosting plan utilisation rates by matching state investment in sector and workforce development
- Ensuring people have proper access to funded transport for supported services; and that NDIS payments support quality, viable services including in rural and remote areas
- Guaranteeing that the Quality and Safeguards Commission will be running on time

The SA Government and the sector wants to work with the Federal Government and the NDIA to make these changes as quickly as possible.

Disabilities Minister Katrine Hildyard said the Federal Government must step up and address these ongoing issues so South Australians with disability receive the supports and services they need to fully participate in the community.

Ms Hildyard said providers are continually being left to foot the bill for services they have provided due to ongoing issues with payments from the NDIA.

Despite the NDIS rolling out across most of South Australia already, the NDIA have only appointed LACs in two regions: Northern Adelaide and Barossa, Light and Lower North.

The LACs play a pivotal role in connecting people to services on the ground and the State Government has picked up this work due to the inaction of the Commonwealth.

The sector is also calling on the Federal Government to guarantee provider of last resort arrangements for those people who, often due to extreme disadvantage, are funded by the NDIS but are unable to access services due to geographic isolation or other complex circumstances.

Ms Hildyard said all of these problems are being compounded because the Federal Government will not lift the cap on employment at the NDIA which has also seen an unprecedented \$180 million spent on external consultants over a 16-month period.

Background

Once fully rolled out, around 32,000 South Australians will be receiving support through the NDIS, which is almost double the number of people previously receiving disability support in the State.

The South Australian Government will invest \$723 million a year in the NDIS, bringing the total value of annual supports under the Scheme to \$1.5 billion.

Quotes attributable to Disabilities Minister Katrine Hildyard

Our South Australian Government is absolutely committed to the NDIS – and we're calling on the Federal Government to lift its game.

It's totally unacceptable that Local Area Coordinators still haven't been appointed across most of our state.

We have identified these issues by talking to those in the sector who are working hard day-in and day-out on the NDIS transition.

I have repeatedly raised these issues with Federal Ministers and with the rollout of the NDIS already underway, we need to see action.

People with disability have waited long enough for the life-changing benefits of the NDIS. The Federal Government needs to keep its promises.

The South Australian Government is committed to working closely with the Federal Government and the NDIA to make the NDIS a life-changing success.

Quotes attributable to National Disability Services State Manager Peter Hoppo

Our members campaigned for the NDIS and continue to strongly support it but have concerns in the way it is being implemented to date.

Not having Local Area Coordinators in place is making the rollout difficult across whole regions of South Australia, with disability service providers trying to fill the gaps.

Many providers are still reporting issues with receiving prompt payment, which is making transitioning to the NDIS much harder.

Quotes attributable to Cara Inc Chief Executive Liz Cohen

We are very supportive of the NDIS for the choice and control that it brings to people with a disability.

However, as with any new initiative, there are a number of teething problems that need to be addressed urgently, to ensure that the people that matter the most are getting the support they need to help them live a better life.

As the NDIS continues to roll out in regions across South Australia, the appointment of Local Area Coordinators to support NDIS participants and their families should be an immediate priority to ensure that the program is a success.

Quotes attributable to Uniting Communities Chief Executive Simon Schrapel

Uniting Communities is embracing the opportunities the NDIS is bringing to enhance the lives and independence of South Australians living with a disability.

We also understand the complexities that come with the transition from traditional approaches of support and financing to the new arrangements.

Uniting Communities wants to work collaboratively with the NDIA and the South Australian Government to ensure that people with disability are able to successfully access and implement their plans and receive the reasonable and necessary supports they deserve.

This is especially important for vulnerable people with high and complex needs who are at risk of falling through the gaps and who warrant specific attention in the roll out of the scheme in South Australia.

Quotes attributable to Community Living Project Inc Executive Officer Prue Gorman

We have been encouraged by seeing many people with disability being enabled through their NDIS funding to build typical and valued lives in their community.

But we do have concerns about the quality of the NDIS planning process.

The review process is currently lengthy and stressful, which adds significant pressure to the lives of people who are already vulnerable and their families.

Quotes attributable to scosa Chief Executive Julian Sawicki

scosa remains fully committed to the successful implementation of the NDIS. The ongoing benefit to participants is significant and scosa is focused upon its participants gaining the best outcomes from the services they choose.

It is however incumbent upon the NDIS to be fully transparent and be prepared to review areas of concern with the transition.

Apart from issues relating to planning difficulties, problems with the portal and delay in appointing Local Area Coordinators in South Australia, the inadequate funding for transport must urgently be reviewed.

Adequately funded transport is a vital enabler for many people with complex and multiple disabilities to participate in the community.

If community participation and mainstreaming is an aim of the NDIS, then the curtailing of funding to such a vital area would seem counter-productive.

scosa urges the NDIS to review their transport funding rules for the benefit of participants and the long term success of the NDIS.

Quotes attributable to Community Support Inc Chief Executive Officer Emma Hinchey

Community Support Inc is fully supportive of, and excited by, the improvements promised by the NDIS, however we are concerned with the quality of some of the plans being delivered by the current planning process.

The plan review process is being relied upon to correct issues with the quality of plans, but the plan reviews are taking far too long.

We are also concerned that plans are not factoring in access to additional support in the event of an emergency. In a crisis, people need immediate access to decision makers who can approve additional funding.

The Local Area Coordinators need to be appointed now and they need to provide the help that participants and their families desperately need to implement their plans quickly and successfully.

The NDIS is complex – support and advocacy must be made available to ensure consistency in the outcomes being achieved from the planning and review processes

Quotes attributable to Can:Do Group Chief Executive Heidi Limareff

The NDIS is a much needed reform to ensure that all Australians with a disability can exercise choice and control and ensure they have access to the right services to meet the needs of their daily lives.

As a launch provider of children's services since the inception of the scheme we have seen many changes, both positive and negative, take place for our clients during the initial trial and rollout.

We wholeheartedly embrace the opportunities that the NDIS brings for our clients, our sector and the State, but believe that a heavy burden has been placed on service providers, many of whom are non-profit, to fill the gap - bearing the costs of unfunded services as well as developing, administering and advocating for effective systems and support.

For the sake of our clients, many of whom are facing unnecessary stress and anxiety on top of their already challenging circumstances, we urge the Commonwealth to work together with the State Government to overcome the barriers to access that are obstacles to the overarching success of the scheme in order to develop an agile, responsive and robust system for the future of all Australians.