

COAG Disability Reform Council

16 June 2017

Statement

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Disability Reform Council (the Council) met today and discussed a number of key issues for the successful roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Productivity Commission review of NDIS Costs

The Council welcomed Productivity Commissioners Ms Angela MacRae and Mr Richard Spencer. The Commissioners spoke about the Productivity Commission's interim Position Paper on its review of NDIS Costs, which was released on 14 June 2017.

The Council noted the interim findings in the Position Paper and that it provides a good synthesis of the views of a wide range of stakeholders (Governments, service providers, research organisations, individuals, NDIS participants and carers, lawyers, consultants and peak bodies for professionals and advocates).

The Council looks forward to the Productivity Commission's final Report, which will be the subject of detailed analysis and discussion at the next Council meeting.

National Disability Insurance Agency

The NDIA Board Chairman, Dr Helen Nugent AO and NDIA Chief Executive Officer, David Bowen, reported on the findings of the extensive consultation the NDIA has undertaken as part of its end-to-end review of participant and provider pathways.

The Council welcomed the actions the NDIA is taking to improve the experience of participants and providers. The Council also acknowledged the progress made in transitioning people with disability into the scheme. Since 1 July 2013, more than 84,945 people with a disability have had a plan approved.

The Council agreed that the NDIA must balance the need to bring participants into the Scheme as quickly as possible with the need to also ensure high-quality participant plans and Scheme sustainability.

Quality and Safeguards

The Council discussed the considerable progress made in implementing the Quality and Safeguards Framework since the Council agreed the Framework in December 2016, including the *NDIS Amendment (Quality and Safeguards Commission and Other Measures) Bill 2017* (the Bill), which was introduced to the Parliament on Wednesday, 31 May 2017.

The Council noted that the Bill establishes an independent NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to protect and prevent people with disability from experiencing harm arising from poor quality or unsafe supports or services under the NDIS, and that this represents a major step forward from current fragmented quality and safeguarding arrangements.

The Council noted the Commonwealth's steps to take into account jurisdictions' views on the Bill, including the Commissioner's complaint functions now explicitly referencing investigation and conciliation; expanding the scope of NDIS registered providers to include providers of supports under Chapter 2 of the NDIS Act; and the Commissioner consulting with persons, organisations, and governments on matters relating to its functions.

The Council noted the Communique from the COAG meeting held on 9 June 2017, which states, '*Leaders agreed that the Disability Reform Council would consider issues of the treatment of people with disability in residential settings and report back to COAG at its next meeting*'. The Council agreed that Senior Officials would undertake this work and report back to the next Council meeting.

DisabilityCare Australia Fund

The Council discussed the initial one-off DisabilityCare Australia Fund payment to States and Territories. The Council agreed that continued consideration of DisabilityCare Australia Fund payment arrangements is required.

Governance

The Council agreed to undertake further work on NDIS governance reform for Full Scheme, and agreed to discuss this at the next Council Meeting.

Continuing to improve outcomes for NDIS participants remains the key focus for the Council for 2017.