

# National Disability and Carer Alliance

[www.disabilitycareralliance.org.au](http://www.disabilitycareralliance.org.au)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**8 July 2010**

## **DISABILITY AND CARER GROUPS UNITE FOR A NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME**

A coalition of groups representing people with disabilities, families and carers and service providers have come together to push for the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Frustrated by years of neglect and underfunding by successive governments, the National Disability and Carer Alliance has decided a strong collective voice is required to ensure the needs of Australians with a disability and their families are firmly placed on the political and public agenda.

The National Disability and Carer Alliance has joined with other groups to form a coalition to push for this landmark reform. The coalition has established a campaign fund to ensure the public understands the need for a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The goal of the campaign to promote awareness of the NDIS and a greater understanding of the opportunities it will provide for people with a disability, their families and carers.

“The National Disability Insurance Scheme represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the lives of people with a disability and their families in this country,” said Lesley Hall, spokesperson for the National Disability and Carer Alliance.

“For too long Australians with a disability have been reliant on limited government support or charitable handouts. They have not received the support they require to be full, active contributing members of the community,” she said.

“The National Disability Insurance Scheme represents the opportunity to finally ensure people with a disability have the same opportunities to contribute and participate as the rest of the community.

“Unless they have personal experience, very few people understand the crisis facing so many people with a disability, their families and carers in this country,” she said.

“Through no fault of their own many people with a disability, their families and carers find themselves in absolute dire circumstances. We need to make people aware of this national disgrace and how a National Disability Insurance Scheme will make a difference.”

A number of organisations providing services to people with a disability, their families and carers have already contributed to the fund. The coalition is asking all groups who work with people with disabilities and their families to make a contribution to ensure the awareness campaign continues.

The peak organisation representing disability service providers, National Disability Services, has joined the coalition. Chief Executive Dr Ken Baker said today NDS recognised that the

National Disability Insurance Scheme represents “a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for transformational change.”

“I am therefore delighted that so many of our members have responded so quickly and so generously by contributing funds from their scarce reserves to this campaign. A number have commented to me that they can think of no more important issue to which they can contribute their resources and they look forward to working alongside people with a disability, their families and carers.”

All of the members of the coalition are committed to working together cooperatively to present a strong united voice to achieve this transformational reform. All look forward to more organisations adding their voices to the campaign.

The coalition has established an initial national steering committee comprising:

Lesley Hall, CEO, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

Kevin Cocks, Director, Queensland Advocacy Inc

Ken Baker, CEO, National Disability Services

Tim Walton, President, National Disability Services

Rob White, CEO, Spastic Centre of NSW

David Barbagallo, CEO, Endeavour

Joan Hughes, CEO, Carers Australia

Pam Webster, National Disability and Carer Alliance

The coalition will soon appoint a National Campaign Director to oversee the awareness campaign.

For further information about the coalition or the campaign for a National Disability Insurance Scheme, please call Kirsten Deane, Executive Director, National Disability and Carer Alliance on 0409 565 925.