

## **PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REPORT MAKES THE CASE FOR CHANGE**

The National Disability and Carer Alliance welcomes today's release of the Productivity Commission's draft report into Disability Care and Support.

National Disability and Carer Alliance Executive Director, Kirsten Deane, said the Productivity Commission inquiry offered the opportunity to introduce the most significant reforms in the disability sector in the last thirty years.

"Australians with a disability, their families and carers – as well as the organisations that support them – have been waiting decades for an opportunity to fix a system that has never worked well and is now in crisis," Ms Deane said.

"That is why, over the past year, the inquiry has received more submissions than any other in the history of the Productivity Commission – even more than the recent study of paid parental leave."

Ms Deane said the high level of interest reflected not only the large numbers of people in the community directly affected by disability but also growing support for the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

"From the beginning the Productivity Commission made it clear the current situation cannot continue. The system is broken and unsustainable," Ms Deane said.

"At present, the disability service system is failing to deliver adequate support to people with a disability, their families and carers. With the disability population projected to increase to 2.3 million people over the next 20 years an already strained system will become unsustainable unless there is significant reform at a national, state and local level.

"The good news is that the Productivity Commission has accepted that the system requires fundamental reform and that there is a need for action. We therefore look forward to examining their proposed solution in detail," Ms Deane said.

Ms Deane said the Alliance was pleased all three major parties – Labor, Coalition and Green – had given in-principle support to the NDIS during the recent federal election and committed to examining the findings of the Productivity Commission.

“We are pleased that the major parties recognise the need to put politics aside in the interests of people with a disability, their families and carers, as well as the social and economic interests of the nation,” she said.

“The introduction of an NDIS will not only deliver short and long term benefits to Australians with a disability and their families but will also deliver important social and economic benefits to the whole community.

“This issue is relevant to all Australians. Making our nation more accessible to people with a disability will not only increase our productivity and create a fairer and more inclusive community but will ensure we are able to meet the challenges facing us in the future.”

The National Disability Strategy, which outlines the Government’s vision for people with a disability, their families and carers received bi-partisan support and was endorsed by the Prime Minister and all state and territory leaders at the last COAG meeting.

“However, many of the goals outlined in the strategy will not be met unless people are adequately resourced and supported,” Ms Deane said.

“We need an NDIS to make many of the worthy goals in the strategy possible.”

Ms Deane said people with a disability their families and carers expected action after the Commission hands down its final report in July.

“The expectation for action is at an all time high,” she said.

“The time for talk is over. Once the final report is released we look forward to all the major parties working together to deliver and implement a scheme that will finally deliver real, meaningful, tangible improvements to the lives of people with a disability, their families and carers.”

The National Disability and Carer Alliance brings together people with a disability, their families and carers and the organisations that support them to provide a strong united voice on the need for major reform of the disability sector. National Disability Services, Carers Australia and the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations formed the Alliance to work cooperatively to improve the lives of Australians with a disability, their families and carers.

The Alliance is united in its support for the Every Australian Counts campaign for an NDIS.

For further comment on the release of the Productivity Commission’s report please contact Alliance founding members **Dr Ken Baker, CEO, National Disability Services, on 0409 606 240** or **Lesley Hall, CEO, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, on 0417 320 818.**

For more information about the Alliance or the Every Australian Counts campaign please call **Executive Director Kirsten Deane on 0409 565 925.**