

MEDIA RELEASE

2017 Budget - Great wins for the NDIS and its safeguarding, concerns for DSP welfare reforms

“The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) is delighted to see the 2017 Federal Budget address the need to fully fund the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) through the additional Medicare levy.

In addition,” states Ms Serena Ovens, PDCN’s Executive Officer, “the introduction of funding for a Quality and Safeguarding Commission for the NDIS will ensure that all within the scheme are treated fairly and with dignity, reducing the risk of vulnerable people being taken advantage of, or suffering the abuses often seen in the past reforms.”

PDCN however are extremely concerned over the continued roll out of the Cashless Welfare Card, taking away a person with disability’s rights to control and manage their funds in a dignified manner.

Of additional concern is the statement made in the budget speech of “denying welfare for a disability caused solely by a person’s own substance abuse.” Should an action like this be taken it would only serve to create greater pressure on other areas of the budget and welfare system, through the likelihood of people for whom this occurred to end up in homelessness. Far better would be to address the issues through early intervention drug and alcohol programs.

Changes to employment services for people with disability and the need for disability employment services to change the way they work in order to deliver employment outcomes for all those with disability, are a positive step towards meeting the needs of those searching for open employment. Further the ability for a person with disability to be able to choose their preferred service provider, or change provider – allowing them greater control in this process further meets the needs of individuals.

“The state of employment for people with disability in Australia, particularly those with significant impairment, remains low overall and is an issue that PDCN believes needs broader reforms” Ms Ovens suggests.

Overall some good wins in many areas of the Budget, however PDCN still has concerns for many of our cohort whom are reliant on welfare reforms, and would welcome the opportunity to work with Government to address through in a more positive approach.

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