# **Federal Budget a ‘fizzer’ for disability**

It’s a case of ‘wait and see’ for people with physical disability under the 2021-22 Federal Budget, with funding dedicated across Aged Care and the NDIS, but limited buy-in on the pre-budget recommendations of the disability sector.

The one win is a dedicated $17.9 million towards a new Early Childhood Program aimed at providing disability-related services for families of young children with disability or developmental needs, which aims to deliver a range of disability‑specific information, workshops and supported playgroups for young children aged 0 to 8 years.

Funding to address concerns regarding progress under the National Disability Strategy was frustratingly absent from the Budget, despite pressure from the disability sector to provide a dedicated national body to both administer the Strategy and evaluate its efficacy.

Similarly, no plans were flagged to address the shortage of accessible housing for people with disability either across social housing or the Specialist Disability Accommodation market.

“While we are glad to see that older people with physical disability are likely to benefit from much needed reforms to the Aged Care Sector, and that young children with disability will have access to much needed supports, we unfortunately have little of substance to give to our members at this time” says PDCN CEO Serena Ovens.

“This is frustrating when we flagged that people with physical disability were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and highlighted key areas to address, such as federal advocacy funding”.

Calls to invest in a National Housing Strategy to increase social and affordable housing in line with Australia’s commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability were also overlooked.

“We’ll be waiting to see what the budget delivers in a practical sense for people with physical disability. For example, we’d like to see the increase funding for the NDIS address shortfalls in Specialist Disability Accommodation but as yet there’s no detail”.

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