



## **PDCN calls for clarity on NDIS reform impacts for people with severe physical disabilities**

**Media Release: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026**

Minister Butler's National Press Club Address yesterday outlined a new suite of reforms to the NDIS. These reforms were framed as "returning the NDIS to its original intent". The extent to which these reforms will impact the physical disability community is not yet clear, and there is an urgent need for clarity from the Government on which participants these reforms will impact. Community fear remains without clarity of the intended changes to the system that supports people to live their daily lives.

Significant reforms detailed in the Minister's address are based around a reduction of spending on the NDIS, with aim to reduce the cost of the scheme from \$70 billion to \$55 billion by 2030, reducing the number of participants to 600,000. To achieve this goal, broad plan reductions were announced with a focus on cuts to social and community participation funding. There is limited clarity on which disability cohorts these reforms will apply to, and it is crucial that people with severe and profound physical disabilities are not impacted.

The Minister also announced that NDIS eligibility will be determined by a new system of functional capacity assessments, as opposed to a diagnosis-based approach. This could ensure access to the NDIS for people with high support needs regardless of their disability or diagnosis, with plan decisions based on the need for support to improve or maintain functional capacity for the individual. This change has the potential to make accessing the right supports easier for those with dynamic disabilities.

Over the coming months, existing NDIS participants will undergo plan reassessments to address these changes. There is a lack of clarity around what the reduction of social and community participation will entail, and how functional needs assessments will be approached. This has created ongoing fear for the physical disability community as the supports we rely on potentially come into question.

The announced NDIS reform places more importance on the implementation of foundational supports than ever before. Foundational supports are intended to provide support to people with disabilities who are not on the NDIS, with states and territories committing to working together to deliver the \$10 billion program over 5 years. With NDIS sustainability measures moving ahead, it is critical that Government provides clarity on how foundational supports will bridge the supports gap.

The Minister also announced reform to the NDIS provider landscape with the introduction of a pre-approved provider list. The intent of this is to improve safeguards around providers and crack down on fraud. It is important that NDIS participants continue to access uninterrupted support through this change, particularly as the majority of current providers are not NDIS registered. PDCN welcomes the

 02 9552 1606  
1800 688 831

 [admin@pdcnsw.org.au](mailto:admin@pdcnsw.org.au)

 3/184 Glebe Point Rd  
Glebe NSW 2037

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

announced introduction of a digital payment system to crack down on fraud and create more transparency in paying for services.

PDCN CEO Edward Morris said people with severe physical disabilities, for whom the scheme was partly intended, must not have NDIS eligibility and funding reduced:

“We rely on these supports to live our lives. While we support targeted measures that guarantee the long-term sustainability of the NDIS, reform must not come at the cost of supports for people with severe physical disabilities to live our aspirations.” Morris said.

In previous reforms to the NDIS, PDCN has been actively engaged in Commonwealth and NSW processes to improve the scheme. This work has been supported by lived-experience evidence from members and sustained engagement with Ministers, the NDIA, disability advocacy networks, more than 40 MPs and Senators, and parliamentary inquiries, including the Federal Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS. This sustained advocacy has helped secure important system improvements, including the removal of APTOS principles from decision-making, strengthened merit review rights for NDIS participants, and increased scrutiny of proposed planning and impairment notice processes.

While PDCN supports efforts to improve scheme integrity and sustainability, we warn that significant risks remain. Reform must be transparent and tested through disability community consultation to continue supports for disability cohorts in greatest need, including those with severe physical disabilities. The Commonwealth Government must provide the physical disability community with a clearer understanding of the impact of reforms to their NDIS supports.