**Submission from the Enabled Youth Disability Network to the NDIS Consultation Paper: An Ordinary Life at Home**

Dear NDIS Policy Team,

On behalf of the Enabled Youth Disability Network Incorporated, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to contribute our feedback to the ‘An ordinary life at home’ consultation paper.

**About the Enabled Youth Disability Network**

The Enabled Youth Disability Network (EYDN) is an organisation based in South Australia run by and for young people living with disability to provide systemic advocacy and peer networks, aiming to give voice to and support young people living with disability to improve their life outcomes. Since 2008, EYDN has been auspiced by JFA Purple Orange, a non-government, social profit organisation. In 2020 EYDN became an incorporated organisation and has a board comprised entirely of young people living with disability.

**Feedback about home and living**

**1. Lack of proper supports**

From our discussions with EYDN members, one of the key needs identified for young people living with disability to be able to move out of home is proper supports. This is compounded by the lack of growth in the care sector, and the lack of support workers available to Australians living with disability. It is very important that people living with disability have the choice and control to decide where they live, and who they live with, as well as who comes into their home to provide supports. This also means being able to have access to the supports they need to make these decisions and meet their goals, particularly around evening and weekend supports.

**Recommendation 1:** The NDIS should work with the Australian Government to increase the number of qualified support workers across the industry to ensure that people living with disability receive consistent and high-quality care to live independently.

**2. Lack of accessible housing**

Lack of accessible and suitable housing is also a significant issue we identified. Currently, young people moving out of home most commonly move into rental properties. The lack of accessible housing makes it extremely difficult for young people living with disability, particularly physical disability, to be able to move out of home and choose where and who they live with. Currently, young people living with disability need to move into assisted living premises, group homes, purchase a home to be able to modify it to suit their accessibility needs, or go through a significant process to try and get a rental property to be modified. There is also a lack of clarity on standards for landlords to make changes to their homes for people living with disability, particularly around what reasonable modifications are, and what requests must not be refused to increase accessibility. There cannot be choice and control for people living with disability to decide where they live when there is a significant lack of accessible housing.

**Recommendation 2:** The NDIS Home and Living Policy should consider how it can support people living with disability to request reasonable adjustments to rental properties to improve accessibility, understand their housing rights, as well as seeking opportunities to create more accessible housing options for people living with disability.

**3. Wait times and lack of clarity about what can be funded**

Even when people living with disability make decisions about their accommodation and living supports, there are significant waiting times to get approvals for these supports and waiting times to have plan reviews when life goals and decisions change. There is also no option for participants to see their draft NDIS plans before they are approved to reduce having to wait for reviews and appeals. There is also a lack of clarity around what can be funded. For example, the NDIA Operational Guidelines states that fixtures and fittings higher than standard grade are not generally funded, however, there may be particular fixtures that can make the house more accessible and easier-to-use for someone living with a disability. In this case, it is not immediately clear to NDIS participants whether they can be funded, and the wait time to receive an outcome is currently too long to encourage people to seek the supports they need to live independently.

**Recommendation 3:** The Australian government should be seeking to increase the operational capacity of the NDIS to reduce these waiting times, as well as analyse ways to increase transparency around funding information and processes.

**4. The role of peer networks**

One of the focuses of EYDN’s work is peer networks, where people living with disability can connect and share information, such as moving out of home, how to make the most of their NDIS plans, how to advocate from themselves, and what people have and haven’t been able to get funding for. Peer networks play a vital role in supporting young people living with disability to consider home and living options, share information about these options and support one another through the process of moving into their desired living arrangement.

**Recommendation 4:** The Australian Government continue to fund initiatives like peer networks so that young people living with disability can become better self-advocates when it comes to where, how, and with whom they live.

We hope our feedback has been useful. Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute our lived experience of disability to this consultation paper.

Please do not hesitate to email sarahf@purpleorange.org.au or call (08) 8373 8388 if you would like to discuss our submission further.

Kind Regards

**Sarah Footner** (Project Leader, EYDN)

**Kathryn Mills** (Chair of EYDN)

**The Enabled Youth Disability Network Incorporated**

10 September 2021