27 December 2024

NDIS participants are leaving hospital faster than ever before, thanks to improvements made by the Australian Government.

New data from the NDIA revealed:

- In November 2024, the average time it took a participant to be discharged, once medically ready, was down to 20 days (nationally).
- This figure is the lowest monthly average recorded.

NDIS Minister, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, said the significant reductions were the result of the Australian Government's dedication to putting people back at the centre of the Scheme.

"From Day 1, this Government has worked tirelessly to get the NDIS back on track for people with disability and their families. Faster hospital discharge is an important part of this work," Minister Shorten said.

"In 2022, it was estimated that in some hospitals across Victoria that unacceptable number people with disability – who were medically ready to be moved from hospital – were having to wait an average of 160 extra days to be discharged.

"Having people spend unnecessary amounts of time in hospital prevents them from living the lives they want but also comes at the expense of the public health system, as hospital beds were being filled unnecessarily at a cost of approximately $2,500 a night to the taxpayer.

"Thankfully, we're helping fix the issue of bed blocking. Last year an Australian Medical Association report estimated that improvements to the process of discharging NDIS participants had already saved hundreds of millions of dollars. This continued focus is seeing further cost reductions and ensuring people with disability can get on with achieving better outcomes."

The NDIA has continued to implement several measures in efforts to expedite the hospital discharge process for NDIS participants.

That includes employing more people to work directly with hospitals and participants across Australia to ensure information is gathered as quickly as possible to fast-track the process.

The Agency now employs almost 200 staff – specialist planners and Health Liaison Officers (HLOs) – whose primary role is to support participants during their transition from hospital, and ensure they have a plan that reflects their disability support needs for a safe and timely discharge.

The NDIA is also working with states to ensure more timely notification and provision of health information to support planning.

“This reduction to discharge times is the result of the Agency working with state health systems to ensure everyone is notified when a participant enters hospital, so the NDIA can then get to work in establishing a discharge plan,” Minister Shorten said.

“In the past there have been barriers to reducing hospital discharge times. We’re now seeing better communication between state and federal systems, who are working more closely together.

“The system isn’t perfect – we know we can still do better – but I’m pleased these times have reduced so significantly. It’s freeing up hospital beds for other Australians, but more importantly its helping participants get back to their lives, so they can get on with living and achieve the positive outcomes the Scheme supports.”

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