Quarterly Report shows participation in NDIS doubles, costs on track

1 May 2014

Participation in the National Disability Insurance Scheme has doubled since last December while costs remain well on track according to the NDIS third Quarterly Monitoring Report, released today.

The report – which covers the three months to March 31 – also shows that average package costs have fallen in the quarter, following improvements in January which provided more guidance about reasonable and necessary levels of support.

National Disability Insurance Agency Chairman Bruce Bonyhady said levels of satisfaction among participants in the NDIS remains very high according to survey data in the report.

“The NDIS is on budget and is growing steadily. That’s welcome news given how crucial the NDIS is to our community and our economy,” Mr Bonyhady said.

“This report shows we are using the experiences gained in the trial sites to build a better NDIS, with better outcomes for Australians with disability and their families.”

To date the largest disability groups across the trial sites are autism, intellectual disability, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy.

Key findings in the report from the four trial sites in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania include:

- 6,434 participants have been found eligible for the NDIS, with 5,414 having an approved plan by the end of March. This is double the number at the end of December.
- The average package cost is now $34,000, down from $40,500 at the end of December, and below the funding expectation of $35,000.
- Around $107 million of support will flow to participants in 2013/14. This is well within the funding envelope of $152 million for 2013/14.
- Satisfaction among participants is very high, sitting at 1.66 on a scale of -2 (extremely unsatisfied) to +2 (extremely satisfied).

“There will obviously be quite a bit of variability in the data from quarter to quarter as different groups are phased into the NDIS. But these results show it’s steady as she goes in the NDIS trial sites, although of course we’ve still got lots more work to do,” Mr Bonyhady said.

In the months ahead the NDIS will undergo further improvements to improve the experience and flexibility of participants, as well as the value for money for all Australian taxpayers. The NDIA is working to:

- Build a diverse and innovative market for disability support, including fostering new providers and helping existing providers move from block funding to a contestable

market.
- Make individual plans more flexible and provide greater control and choice to participants.
- Increase the capacity of disability support organisations to get people ready for the broader roll-out of the NDIS.
- Ensure approved plans help to build family, informal and community supports.
- Work with governments to tackle challenges with “in-kind” arrangements which restrict control and choice among participants and hurt cash-flow for some providers.

This NDIA is committed to delivering the best scheme possible to build better lives for Australians with disability and their families, and a stronger economy and national budget.

The Productivity Commission – in its most exhaustive study ever – found that the NDIA will add around one per cent to gross domestic product when fully operational.

Prior to the NDIS, spending on disability by all government was growing at eight per cent per year, after inflation. Accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers estimate that by 2035 the cost of disability services without reform will be $20 billion more than the annual cost of the NDIS.

The NDIA extends its thanks to everyone involved in the trial phase of the NDIS so far, and looks forward to constantly improving the NDIS.

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