29 July 2015

Paralympic gold medallist Kurt Fearnley will be visiting Tennant Creek to talk to locals about how the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is changing lives in the Northern Territory and across Australia.

Mr Fearnley is a member of the NDIS Independent Advisory Council, and will be a guest at the Desert Harmony Festival being held in Tennant Creek from July 31 to August 5.

Tennant Creek is part of the Barkly region NDIS trial site. As at 31 March there were 48 people with disability involved with the NDIS in Barkly region and the number of participants has continued to grow.

Mr Fearnley said he was thrilled to talk to people about the difference the NDIS is making in the Northern Territory.

“This is a great opportunity to talk to people on the ground in this uniquely Australian setting of the Barkly region about how the NDIS will change the lives of people with disability,” he said.

National Disability Insurance Agency General Manager Anne Skordis said the NDIA was working closely with Aboriginal people and community groups as part of the trial in the Barkly region.

“The trial in the Barkly region is helping us learn how best to make the NDIS work for people living in remote areas and work in the most effective way with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities”.

“This will be important as we continue to roll out the NDIS so that it reaches across the country and makes a difference in the lives of people with disability, their families and carers.”

More than 16,000 people with disability are now involved in the NDIS across Australia and $754 million has been committed to people with disability in Australia to fund services and equipment to live more independent lives.

The Australian Government has provided $60,000 to support this year’s Desert Harmony festival and this year there is a strong disability theme, with the tagline ‘Let NDIS be light’.

The Desert Harmony Festival promotes the cultural diversity and talent of Indigenous Australians from the Barkly region.

Mr Fearnley is a three-time Australian Paralympic gold medallist and has won marathons all around the world, including the New York, London and Chicago marathons multiple times.

He has also completed the Kokoda track and sailed with a winning Sydney to Hobart Yacht race crew. Mr Fearnley is a passionate disability advocate and was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to sport at the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games.

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