Media release from the Minister - NDIA to strengthen participant safety

10 April 2023

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is improving participant safety, through the release of a new NDIA Participant Safeguarding Policy.

This Policy marks the delivery of one of the NDIA's first major co-design projects with the disability community since the commitment to co-design was enshrined in the NDIS Act in 2022.

The Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Bill Shorten said this Policy outlines the Agency's commitment to support people with disability who engage with the NDIS to create or expand safeguards to improve their safety.

"It represents a shift to a stronger focus on proactive identification, assessment, and management of risk to minimise the likelihood of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation," Mr Shorten said.

"We know people with disability are more likely to experience violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation."

Safeguards are things or actions people with disability, their friends and families can do to manage risks of harm that may be present in their lives.

The NDIA heard from more than 210 people in the co-design of this Policy. This included 75 hours of workshops with participants, their support networks, the disability community and NDIA staff.

"This Government is ensuring people with disability are directly involved in decisions that impact their lives through inclusive co-design," Mr Shorten said.

"People with disability are the experts in their own lives, they understand their disability better than anyone and what they need to be safe. I commend all those involved in developing this important Policy through a co-design process, including the Co-design workshop groups, Participant Safety Co-design Steering Committee, NDIA Co-design Advisory Group, and NDIA staff.

Tricia Malowney, member of both the Independent Advisory Council and the Participant Safety Co-design Steering Committee said everyone has a right to safety, and to live free from harm.

"This Policy not only acknowledges that safety is a shared responsibility, and that we all have a role to play in ensuring the safety of participants, but it will also guide the way the NDIA works with participants to identify and manage risks and take steps to develop safeguards in their

lives.” Ms. Malowney said.

“The co-design of this Policy ensured the voices of people with disability were at the centre of its development. I look forward to the implementation of this Policy and the positive impact it will have on our lives.”

The NDIA Participant Safeguarding Policy is one of the many strategies the NDIA is implementing to improve participant experience. This work supports other important activities underway to better support people with disability to be safe. This includes the Disability Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and the NDIS Review.

The Agency will work side by side with others, including the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to uphold shared obligations and responsibilities across the NDIS service and support system to support people with disability to create or expand safeguards to improve their safety.

The Agency will work with people with disability to implement this Policy.

View further information on the Participant Safeguarding Policy and Implementation Plan.

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