

DISABILITY REFORM MINISTERS' MEETING (DRMM)

Perth WA – 21 October 2022

COMMUNIQUÉ

Commonwealth, State and Territory Disability Ministers met on 21 October 2022 at Hale House in Perth. Ministers from Victoria and the Northern Territory were apologies for this meeting.

Ministers welcomed the newly-appointed National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Board Chair Mr Kurt Fearnley AO and NDIA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ms Rebecca Falkingham PSM, to their first meeting.

Mr Fearnley spoke about the importance of the National Disability Insurance Scheme as a critical investment in the nation's social and community infrastructure, and a key driver of social and economic change. He committed to working closely with people with disability and the sector to ensure the Scheme is effective at achieving outcomes for people with disability.

Ministers also welcomed Co-Chairs of the recently announced NDIS Review, Professor Bruce Bonyhady AM and Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM who shared the Review's commitment to work with participants, their families and carers, providers and workers to put people with disability back at the centre of the NDIS.

Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services CEO Ms Vicki O'Donnell OAM, attended as a guest to present on challenges faced by Indigenous Australians living in remote communities accessing disability supports through their NDIS plan. Ministers took the opportunity to discuss the experience of First Nations peoples across Australia around the complexity of the Scheme, the need for greater information to support provision of culturally appropriate services, and better access to supports in thin markets.

National Disability Services WA Joan McKenna Kerr also presented on insights around ensuring regulation of safe, quality services and participant choice and control.

Ministers also considered:

- **NDIS Markets:** Ministers discussed the need to address barriers to NDIS access and service delivery in thin markets, including for particular support types, First Nations and culturally diverse communities, and regional and remote Australia. Ministers discussed learnings from [previous consultations](#) and a recent visit to Longreach and the lack of progress in thin markets. Ministers agreed the need for NDIA to work with communities and state and territory governments to use more flexible approaches to address thin markets, and for the NDIS Review to explore ways to address thin markets as an early priority.
- **Regulatory Settings:** Ministers discussed regulatory and outreach arrangements and the importance of upholding rights and choice and control of NDIS participants while ensuring supports are high-quality, safe and protect people at risk of harm. Ministers agreed participant safety and possible improvements would be standing item for DRMM moving forward and for work to be progressed as part of the NDIS Review.
- **Australia's Disability Strategy:** The Tasmanian and Australian Capital Territory Ministers provided an update on their Disability Inclusion Action plans.
- **Supported Employment Roundtable:** Ministers noted the roundtable held on 10 October 2022 and the Commonwealth's intention to formally seek agreement to principles developed at the roundtable and a plan to enact those principles at the next DRMM.

- **Federation Funding Agreement Reform:** Ministers discussed proposed changes to new Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) schedules aimed at demonstrating more clearly how all governments are delivering more inclusive and accessible infrastructure, services and supports for people with disability. The Council of Federal Financial Relations will consider changes to FFA schedules in 2023.
- **Hospital Discharge:** Ministers acknowledged the positive impacts of recent efforts to accelerate hospital discharge for NDIS participants who were medically fit for discharge. Ministers noted the significant decrease in the number of people with disability in hospital due to implementation of agreed initiatives in the NDIA, and jointly coordinated action. Ministers committed to continued focused effort in this area.
- **COVID-19:** Ministers discussed that people with disability remain at greater risk of serious illness and death from COVID-19. Ministers noted the ongoing work needed to strengthen the response through expanded supports to NDIS participants and further work to promote third and fourth dose vaccination and better practice infection controls.
- **AAT:** Ministers received an update on the positive progress made to reduce the legacy caseload of matters before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Ministers agreed to meet again in December 2022.