



Disability & Community Services Commissioner Welcomes Legislation to Protect Critical Safeguards

ACT Disability & Community Services Commissioner, Mary Durkin, today welcomed the introduction of amendments to the Disability Services Act in the Legislative Assembly.

“These amendments will ensure that key safeguards and quality assurance standards continue to apply to disability services during the trial of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS),” Ms Durkin said.

“I am pleased to see the ACT Government taking these steps to ensure that critical protections for people with a disability and their families are retained during the trial of the NDIS.”

As part of the introduction of the NDIS, the ACT Government will transition out of the role of funding disability services, meaning safeguards that currently exist in contracts will cease, as will the authority of the ACT Government to mandate compliance.

“These amendments will create a legislated obligation for disability services to meet minimum safeguards and quality standards during the NDIS trial period,” Ms Durkin said.

“While my complaints handling role and the independent oversight of disability services that my office provides is one part of the equation, the system must also continue to ensure that services for people with disabilities and their families are delivered by a quality workforce, that screening processes operate in a way to protect the most vulnerable people with disabilities, that services are open to scrutiny and that critical incidents are reported and addressed.

“At the heart of this legislation is the protection of people with a disability and their families, for whom these existing safeguards were created. I commend the ACT Government for being the only jurisdiction to act in such a strong way,” Ms Durkin said.

While there are many committed disability service providers in the ACT, providing excellent services for people with disabilities, the NDIS will be a time of tremendous change.

“The NDIS will mean change on a scale that has not been seen in other trial sites, as the ACT will be the first jurisdiction to transition the full population. This will be a period of challenge, opportunity and change for people with a disability. It is critical they can continue to expect and rely on the safeguards with which they are familiar.

“And I am pleased to say that these amendments will protect the fundamental human rights of people with disability by retaining these important safeguards.”

“I look forward to continuing to work with the ACT disability sector to ensure the delivery of quality service provision for people with a disability. I am confident any complaints will continue to be resolved in a way that improves the lives of people with disabilities while also enabling service providers to improve the quality of their services,” Ms Durkin said.

Media Contact: Mary Durkin, 6205 2222, 0407 240 638