

**COAG Disability Reform Council  
Melbourne, 18 December 2013  
Communiqué**

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Disability Reform Council (the Council) met today in Melbourne. The meeting was chaired by Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, Assistant Minister for Social Services, and Senator the Hon Arthur Sinodinos AO, Assistant Treasurer.

All jurisdictions reaffirmed their strong commitment to implementing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) across Australia.

**Report from National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Board**

The Council considered a report from the NDIA Board on the progress of the NDIS trial sites in the Hunter area in New South Wales, the Barwon area in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.

The Council noted that the trials are delivering positive results for people with disability and their families and carers, enabling greater choice and control over their disability supports, and that for many people with disability the additional support that is being provided by the scheme is assisting their achievement of goals, and increasing their independence and social and economic participation.

The Council agreed that the early learning from the trial sites indicate that more work needs to be done to build the scheme's service delivery capability, to improve the pace of client transitions to the scheme and ensure the fiscal sustainability of the scheme, and to prepare for the transition from trials to the full implementation of the NDIS.

In line with the outcomes of the COAG meeting of 13 December the Council agreed that the Co-chairs would ask the NDIA Board to prepare a report for the Council on cost drivers in the NDIS. The Council also agreed to consider at its next meeting a report on recommended strategies to address NDIS implementation issues and financial issues that have been identified in the early stages of the trials, noting that trial sites in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory are yet to commence and therefore the report will not consider any data from these trials, and to provide advice to COAG on these issues.

**Evaluation**

The National Institute of Labour Studies (NILS) at Flinders University of South Australia is leading a consortium of evaluation, survey research and disability experts to undertake an evaluation of the NDIS.

The Council approved a framework for the evaluation of the NDIS prepared by NILS which outlines the scope, design and high level methodology for the evaluation, as well as key evaluation challenges. The Council noted that the first wave of fieldwork commences in early 2014.

### **National Standards for Disability Services**

The Council formally endorsed new National Standards for Disability Services. The new National Standards, along with the associated resource package, serve as a practical tool for improving service quality.

### **National Injury Insurance Scheme**

The Council noted the National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) is an integral element of the Productivity Commission's disability reform recommendations and is intended to assist in the financial sustainability of the NDIS over the longer term.

The Council noted that while good progress has been made on certain aspects of the NIIS, particularly in relation to motor vehicle accidents, significant complex technical work remains in order for Governments to take decisions, including in relation to workplace accidents, medical treatment injury and general accidents.

### **Next Meeting**

The Council agreed that at its next meeting in March 2014 it will consider its recommendations to COAG to improve the implementation of the scheme.