



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **THE BIGGEST REFORM IN GENERATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY**

**The lives of Australians living with disabilities will be turned around thanks to the announcement of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) by the Federal Government today – the most significant reform to the disability sector in generations.**

MS Australia welcomed the news on behalf of 20,000 people living with the devastating effects of multiple sclerosis (MS) and their families, and applauded the Government for their vision.

“Today’s announcement is a win for Australians living with disabilities like MS, who have been calling on governments for many years to make this courageous decision,” MS Australia’s Manager of Policy and Community Partnerships Alan Blackwood said.

“Generations of people with disabilities and their families have spent lifetimes negotiating their way through the minefield of governments to fight basic rights like care and equipment.

“The national scheme will mean they will finally get the chance to get the support they need over their lifetime – something all Australians deserve. This is an outstanding demonstration of the impact of the Government’s Social Inclusion agenda. The NDIS is a central part of the COAG national Disability Strategy to ensure people with disabilities can be active players in the Australian Community.”

Mr Blackwood said the national scheme would particularly benefit people living with progressive diseases like MS.

“This scheme will provide some long term certainty for people who would otherwise have their futures stripped away by diseases like MS. Knowing that their future care needs, equipment and home modifications can be met by this scheme is of very high value.”

The scheme will provide mechanisms to keep young people out of nursing homes – something MS Australia and the Young People in Nursing Homes Alliance work extremely hard to achieve.

Dr Bronwyn Morkham, National Director of the Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance said that the recognition that young people with disabilities don't belong in aged care homes was a key factor in the Commission's design of the scheme.

“People with a disability have a right to a life worth living in the community and this scheme offers potential for different pathways to be established.

“There is a lot of work to do to upgrade the dilapidated system we now have, to ensure that the health and disability systems indeed have the capacity to manage people's needs effectively.

“The Government today rightly identified the need to build a specialist workforce and service system in disability services. This work needs to start now,” Dr Morkham said.

The development of the scheme will need a significant amount of cooperation between State and Federal Governments, and technical policy development. We trust that the State and Territory Governments will engage in this development with enthusiasm and goodwill.

**Ends**

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**Note to editors and producers: Interviews with Mr Blackwood, Dr Morkham and people living with MS are available upon request.**