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| 6 February 2025

Media Release: Take the Time for Codesign: 255 Organisations Demand More Time to Codesign NDIS Reforms



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A coalition of 255 disability organisations and providers, including Australia’s peak disability representative bodies, have come together to call for urgent action from the Government and the new Minister for the NDIS, Amanda Rishworth, to protect the safety and wellbeing of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants amid rushed reforms.

We are calling for the Government to honour its commitment to genuinely co-design reforms with the disability community and for a more careful, well-paced process which will lead to better, fairer and more effective reforms. With eligibility reassessments underway and support needs assessments scheduled to commence on 1 September 2025, we propose a phased approach that allows time for proper co-design, pilot testing, and refinement before widespread implementation.

The campaign statement from Every Australian Counts, endorsed by 254 disability organisations and providers, outlines the following key concerns:

1. **Rushed Implementation:** The reforms are being introduced without the promised two to five years of co-design and testing. This approach risks serious harm to participants due to untested assessment tools and budget-setting processes.
2. **Unjust Eligibility Reassessments:** NDIS participants are receiving inadequate notice and unclear communication about required evidence for eligibility reassessments. Approximately 600 people per week are being removed from the scheme without guarantees of access to alternate supports, putting participants' safety and wellbeing at risk.

The signatories are calling for the Government to:

- **Extend Timeframes:** We propose a phased approach that allows time for consultation, pilot testing and refinement before widespread implementation, to ensure reforms meet the needs of people with disability.
- **Commit to Real Co-Design:** Collaborate meaningfully with people with disability, their families, and representative organisations to develop sustainable solutions.
- **Prioritise Safety and Wellbeing:** Stop the rushed eligibility reassessments and ensure that foundational supports are in place for people who are not eligible for the NDIS, so that no one falls through the cracks and is left without critical services.

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The statement urges the Government to course-correct and work with the disability community to develop reforms that protect participants, uphold human rights, and strengthen the integrity of the NDIS.

Note: EAC met recently with Minister Rishworth and Department representatives to discuss our concerns. Minister Rishworth said she was committed to working together to address community concerns. On the 3rd of February 2025, it was announced that "From today, participants will now have more time to get information to us. We have extended the timeframe for participants to provide additional information to support eligibility reassessments from 28 to 90 days." EAC welcomes this announcement.

Statement by Dr George Taleporos, Independent Chair, Every Australian Counts:

"We are united in calling on the Government to take the time to listen to the serious concerns in our community. These changes must be implemented with meaningful co-design and proper testing. The wellbeing of participants must come first. The NDIS is too important for hasty

changes. With genuine collaboration, we can create reforms that protect and empower people with disability. We want to work with the new Minister to get things right. The extended timeframe for participants to provide additional information to support eligibility reassessments from 28 to 90 days is a positive step in the right direction.”

Statement by Ross Joyce, CEO of Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO):

“The government must change course on its current reform of the NDIS. Their approach must be measured and inclusive. As Every Australian Counts makes clear, it is essential that people with disability and their representative organisations are genuinely involved in shaping change that directly impacts our lives.

The level of support this campaign has generated shows the willingness of the disability community to work collaboratively with government to achieve meaningful and lasting improvements. The government must listen.

Rushed reforms, without proper consultation and thorough testing, risk significant harm to people with disability, and to the Scheme. If the government wants the NDIS to empower people with disability, provide the right supports in the best way, and operate fairly and transparently, the government must listen to the community, and take the necessary time to get these reforms right.”

Statement by Trinity Ford, President of People With Disability Australia (PWDA):

“The NDIS is a lifeline for Australians with disability but rushed changes are leading to inadequate supports and harming participants. The safety, health and independence of people with disability must always come first and right now it is not.

The current reassessment process is unfair and harmful. People with disability are getting generic letters with little explanation, being given barely any time to respond, and then being removed from the NDIS at alarming rates. This process ignores human rights and leaves people without the essential supports they need to live their lives and participate in the community.

It is unacceptable to revoke funding for critical supports without ensuring there is a safety net in place. This is not just a bureaucratic failure—it’s a human rights crisis.

Co-design was promised, but it hasn’t happened. Co-design means working side by side with people with disability, their families, and their representatives to make sure changes actually work for their needs. This isn’t just about doing the right thing; it’s about making sure the NDIS is the best Scheme it can be.”

Statement by Hayley Stone, Acting CEO of Deafness Forum Australia:

“This is terrible public policy, which is hurting real lives. It seems incredible that the Government would even consider removing participants from the scheme while simultaneously dismantling the ILC program with nothing to replace these supports on the foreseeable horizon. The NDIA Independent Review referred to the NDIS as the Oasis in the desert – the Government has created a harsher desert and is forcing people back into it.”

Statement by Dave Murphy, Deputy Chair of Autistic Self Advocacy Network of Australia & New Zealand (ASAN-AUNZ):

“We share the deep concerns outlined in the statement regarding the Government’s rushed approach to implementing significant changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

We stand in solidarity with all supporting organisations and individuals in advocating for a more thoughtful and inclusive approach to NDIS reforms. The safety and wellbeing of NDIS participants must be the foremost priority.”

Statement by Muriel Cummins, Occupational Therapy Society for Invisible and Hidden Disabilities (OTSi):

“The current pace of reform is creating participant uncertainty and distress, and the risk of unsafe decision making that will impact access to essential disability supports. NDIS Rules and new needs assessment must be co-designed with participants, their representatives, and allied health professionals. This reform is too important to get it wrong.”

See the full joint statement below: <https://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/campaign-statement-take-the-time-for-codesign-protect-ndis-participants-safety-and-wellbeing/>
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