



## OUR PLAN TO

# SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

## KEY POINTS

The Morrison Government is backing Australians with disability, their families and carers.

We proudly support the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which is transforming the lives of people with disability, their families and carers.

It is important to get it right.

We are committed to providing individual choice and control to people with disability, to create opportunity and so they can achieve their goals.

We understand that people with disability want to play an important role contributing to the social and economic life of our community.

We recognise that it is good for them, their families and the nation.

If people with disability want to work, we will support them to find and keep a job.

Keeping the economy strong is vital.

It is only by building a stronger economy that we can guarantee the essential services that people with disability, their families and their carers rely on and deliver them the jobs they deserve.

A re-elected Morrison Government will:

- Continue to ensure the NDIS is fully funded by building a stronger economy and keeping the budget in the black.
- Rollout new NDIS participant planning pathways – making sure people with disability have a single point of contact with the NDIS, and can choose to be on a longer NDIS plan of up to 3 years if their disability is stable.
- Expand the NDIS community connectors program to support and assist hard to reach communities - including Indigenous Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and ageing parents of children with disability - to navigate the NDIS and get the services they or their children need.
- Introduce a new NDIS Participant Service Guarantee – setting new standards for shorter timeframes for people with disability to get an NDIS plan and to have their plan reviewed, with a particular focus on children, and participants requiring specialist disability accommodation (SDA) and assistive technology.
- Commit \$45 million to develop a national disability information gateway, including a website and 1800 number, to assist all people with disability and their families to locate and access services in their communities.
- Introduce a new 7 per cent employment target for people with disability across the Australian Public Service (APS) by 2025.
- Provide \$2 million to support people with autism to find and keep a job, including a \$1.5 million national expansion of the successful Dandelion Program in partnership with DXC Technology.

## OUR RECORD

The Coalition has implemented significant reforms to improve the lives of people with disability, their families and their carers.

## WE ARE IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY

Since 2013, the Liberal National Government, in partnership with the states and territories, has released:

- The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 Second Implementation Plan – Driving Action 2015-2018.
- The Australian Government Plan to Improve Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with Disability.
- National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 Australian Government Action Plan.

In 2017, also under the second implementation plan, we released the *Australian Government Action Plan* and the *Australian Government Plan to Improve Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with Disability (the Indigenous plan)*.

To support the Indigenous plan, our Government announced funding of \$3 million for two targeted projects: a research to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners and ex-prisoners with disability and a trial on integrated health and education approaches to support students with disability in remote communities.

We have also announced \$10.5 million to fund initiatives to help build inclusive communities in the final two years of the current strategy and build the foundation for delivery of a new strategy for beyond 2020.

Consultation on a new strategy for beyond 2020 has now commenced.

## WE ARE ROLLING OUT THE NDIS AND MAKING IT THE BEST IT CAN BE

The NDIS is rolling out in accordance with the agreements signed between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories - area by area, group by group.

The NDIS has grown by more than 900 per cent in less than three years – from about 30,000 participants in 2016 to almost 280,000 today. More than 85,000 – or almost one in three – are receiving support for the very first time.

The provider market has massively expanded, from around 3,500 to more than 20,200 service providers – an increase of almost 580 per cent over the same period.

NDIS budget funding is growing strongly – from \$13.3 billion in 2018-19 to almost \$18 billion in 2019-20 and more than \$22 billion in 2020-21.

We continue to roll out improvements to better support NDIS participants, their families and carers.

For example, we are implementing a new participant planning pathway, with face-to-face planning (where this is the participant's preference), a single point of contact, easier to read plans and improved training for NDIS staff.

We are actively promoting longer term plans of up to 3 years for people with disability whose circumstances are stable – reducing red tape for participants and providers who will no longer need to get a plan every 12 months.

The length of a plan will be determined in consultation with the participant, who will still be able to request a plan review at any time if their circumstances change.

We are rolling out a new psychosocial disabilities stream, with specialised planners and closer linkages with mental health services, and we are providing better planning and pricing for NDIS participants with complex support needs. These improvements will lead to a better NDIS experience and improved long term outcomes for NDIS participants.

We are beginning to see the development of a vibrant and diverse market for Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), helping more Australians with disability to live better lives - with more independence, more privacy and more engagement with the broader community.

There are now 12,350 NDIS participants with SDA in their plan – a 13 per cent increase in the 12 months since December 31 2018 – and the number of registered SDA providers has increased from 802 to 892.

Our significant reforms to SDA will simplify processes for people with disabilities and encourage greater investment in SDA for an estimated 28,000 participants when the NDIS is fully rolled out.

As a result of our reforms, participants, their carers or families will be able to go into the market and find or commission a home that suits their individual needs.

We are providing greater pricing certainty to SDA investors, and will allow properties under construction to be precertified so that investors have more certainty that their property will meet SDA design standards upon completion.

All of these SDA reforms are being supported by a dedicated planning team in the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the establishment of an SDA industry reference group to provide input on SDA policy and price settings.

We are making it easier and quicker for NDIS participants to access assistive technologies (AT), such as wheelchairs, magnifying devices or vehicle and home modifications, including:

- replacement for standard AT items will be quickly assessed without needing a full re-assessment, and will only require one quote for items valued between \$1,500 and \$15,000;
- From April 2019, we have started a pilot of a new approach to improve the quality and timeliness of assessment for participants requiring complex and non-standard AT; and
- In June 2019, we will introduce changes making it easier for participants to access refurbished or pre-used AT.

These changes build on earlier improvements to AT processes. Since May 2018, low cost, low risk AT under \$1,500 could be purchased without further assessment, quotes or approvals once approved as reasonable and necessary in a participant's plan. This benefited an estimated 45 per cent of participants requiring AT. Since December 2018, no more than two quotes have been required for AT costing greater than \$1,500.

## WE HAVE COMMITTED TO A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF YOUNGER PEOPLE LIVING IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

Our reforms to the NDIS have allowed us to commit to a national action plan to get younger people out of residential aged care. Under our plan we will:

- Support those already living in aged care aged under 45 to find alternative, age-appropriate housing and supports by 2022, if this is their goal.
- Supporting those already living in aged care aged under 65 to find alternative, age-appropriate housing and supports by 2025, if this is their goal.
- Halve the number of younger people aged under 65 years entering aged care by 2025.

While appropriate attention will be given to the small number of younger people aged under 45, this will not preclude or prevent our plan from immediately benefitting all people aged under 65 currently living in residential aged care.

We will continue to work beyond 2025 to minimise to the fullest extent possible the number of younger people aged under 65 years entering and living in aged care.

## PROVIDING FOR SAFE AND QUALITY SERVICES FOR NDIS PARTICIPANTS

The Morrison Government believes all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability are abhorrent and have no place in society.

We committed \$209 million to establish the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission from 1 July 2018. The NDIS Commission is already up and running in NSW and South Australia, with operations to begin in all other states from July 2019 (except Western Australia, to start in July 2020).

The NDIS Commission is an independent statutory body with strong investigation and regulatory powers. It can take tough action including banning orders and substantial civil penalties on both providers and workers.

The NDIS Commission is responsible for registering providers, handling complaints, receiving and managing incident notifications, setting quality standards and enforcing a Code of Conduct for NDIS providers and workers.

In partnership with the states and territories, the NDIS Commission will also provide clinical leadership in behaviour support and promote the reduction and elimination of restrictive practices.

It will host a \$13.6 million national database of NDIS worker screening clearances from 1 July 2019 – which will provide a way to check that people who are working, or seek to work, in the NDIS do not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to people with disability.

The NDIS Commission is already doing its job, with more than 600 complaints handled in the first six months of operation.

We have also established a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability – with funding of \$527.9 million over five years.

This funding includes more than \$100 million to support people with disability participate in the inquiry through the provision of advocacy and counselling support.

What we learn from the Royal Commission will help to inform governments, institutions and the wider community on how to protect people with disability.

## WE ARE GROWING THE MARKET FOR DISABILITY SERVICES AND JOBS

The Morrison Government is investing to ensure that NDIS participants have access to the services they need.

We have released the Growing the NDIS Market and Workforce Strategy to support the creation of an additional 90,000 full-time jobs under the NDIS in the next 5 years.

We are providing \$45.6 million through the NDIS Jobs and Market Fund to support the growth, capacity and capability of the NDIS provider market and workforce so that it can meet the needs of NDIS participants.

We have established the \$33 million Boosting the Local Care Workforce Program and launched the NDIS Demand Map to provide local post code level data to assist NDIS providers with their business planning. Tailored business advice (up to \$20,000) to help providers transition to the NDIS is also available.

We have announced an \$850 million injection per year into the NDIS market from 2019-20. New prices include a minimum increase of almost \$11 per hour for therapists and up to a 15.4 percent price increase to the base limit for attendant care and community participation.

By encouraging an increase in services, this will mean NDIS participants can better access the quality and innovative supports that meet their individual needs.

## WE ARE TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Despite their enthusiasm, commitment and good reputation as employees, people with disability too often find it hard to get into the workforce.

About 14 per cent of working age people in Australia have a disability but people with disability comprise only nine per cent of the workforce.

Only 53 per cent of Australians with disability are participating in work compared with 83 per cent of Australians without disability.

The Morrison Government is committed to helping people with disability who have the desire and capacity to work, to find and keep a job.

Our significant reforms to Disability Employment Services (DES) on 1 July 2018 have seen a 27 per cent increase in the number of people with disability voluntarily participating in the DES program.

Our reforms also provide people with disability with greater choice and control over who they receive support from, enabling them to choose someone who best meets their needs. So far, over 9,800 participants have taken this opportunity, no questions asked.

Because of these reforms, we are also seeing greater employment outcomes – 82 per cent of successful job placements are lasting at least 13 weeks, an increase of 24 per cent over previous arrangements.

In November 2018, the Morrison Government also established the NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce, charging it with overcoming barriers to employment for NDIS participants and developing an NDIS Employment Strategy by July 2019.

We are backing the Taskforce with a \$19.9 million grant round for projects that boost economic participation for people with disability.

The Morrison Government has already provided \$300,000 for the Impact21 pilot program, delivered by not-for-profit e.motion21. The pilot aims to educate and employ young adults with Down syndrome.

The pilot includes a one-year work readiness program, including partnership with a national employer and a seven-week work placement program.

We are also encouraging employers to hire people with disability through the 'Employ their Ability' campaign. The campaign aims to highlight the benefits of employing people with disability and ensure employers are aware of the government support and programs available to help them.

As part of the 'Employ their Ability' campaign, we have also released the Employer Toolkit, an online resource to guide employers through the entire process of employing people with disability.

Our plan to strengthen the Australian economy has already seen 1.3 million jobs created across the economy over the past five years. We have a plan to keep our economy strong and create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years.

Our NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce and grants will help ensure that people with disability will have real employment opportunities and share in the benefits of a strong and growing jobs market.

## WE ARE SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

The Morrison Government will invest almost \$29 billion for students with disability from 2018 to 2029.

This record level of funding will grow by 5.1 per cent on average per student with disability each year. This funding is in addition to the base per student funding amount provided for all students at each school, and in addition to the funding provided by the states and territories.

Our funding also recognises the individual needs of students, and provides real needs-based funding consistently across Australia.

Under the special deals on schools funding Labor signed, funding for students with disability was inconsistent across the states and territories. Each state had a different definition of disability which meant a student with a disability could be funded in one state but not another.

Under the Coalition's reforms, the Commonwealth will provide the same level of funding for a student with a disability regardless of the state in which they live, and funding increases with the student's level of need.

## WE HAVE INVESTED IN ADVOCACY TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Since September 2013, the Coalition's investment in disability advocacy has grown from \$19.7 million to \$34.4 million in 2018-19, recognising the significant challenges involved for people with disability to understand and access the NDIS.

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## OUR PLAN

### ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL NDIS COMMUNITY CONNECTORS PROGRAM

A re-elected Morrison Government will complete the rollout of the NDIS.

It is estimated that more than 460,000 participants will benefit from the NDIS when it is fully rolled out in 2020.

To finalise the rollout of the NDIS and ensure that hard to reach communities are engaged in the NDIS, a re-elected Morrison Government will commit \$20 million to expand the NDIS Community Connectors Program.

The program will assist rural and remote communities (including Indigenous communities), culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and ageing parents of children with disability to engage and navigate the NDIS.

NDIS Community Connectors would assist hard to reach communities engage with the NDIS and assist them in access, planning and implementation processes.

The role of Community Connectors would be to provide a community based and trusted resource, to actively connect people with disability and their families with the NDIS and NDIS providers.

Community Connectors would assist potential NDIS participants and their families to acquire the evidence required to test their eligibility for the NDIS, assist with the development of culturally appropriate plans, and help link them with providers to implement their plans.

We have also already announced \$165 million to continue to support the smooth transition of remaining clients of Commonwealth programs into the NDIS or continuity of support services in 2019-20.

A re-elected Morrison Government will continue our work to deliver an NDIS that benefits people with disability, their families and their carers. This will include:

- Continued improvements to NDIS planning processes.
- Better use of functional assessments to assist in access and planning decisions.
- Piloting new approaches to improve the quality and timeliness of assessment for participants requiring complex and non-standard assistive technology.
- Removing restrictions that currently prevent some families from living together in SDA.
- Implementing the national action plan to reduce the number of younger people entering residential aged care.

- Rolling out the new \$398 million NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) strategy.
- Further enhancements to the NDIS myplace portal, website and other ICT.
- More improvements to NDIS pricing, including deregulating pricing where appropriate.

## INTRODUCING A NEW NDIS PARTICIPANT SERVICE GUARANTEE

With the NDIS transition period nearing an end, it is now also time to set up the NDIS for future success.

A re-elected Morrison Government will therefore introduce a new NDIS Participant Service Guarantee following the practical completion of the NDIS rollout in 2020.

The new NDIS Participant Service Guarantee will set timeframes for participants to receive an access decision (that is, a decision on whether they will be covered by the NDIS); to have their NDIS plan approved; and to have their NDIS plan reviewed, should a participant request a review.

Under the NDIS Act introduced with bipartisan support in 2013, the only requirement placed on the NDIA was to make an access decision within 21 days of receiving all information required to make that decision.

While this was appropriate for the transition phase with all the complexity of rolling out the NDIS to 460,000 people - it is no longer fit for purpose for the NDIS at maturity.

These new service standards will reduce the time taken for people with disability to access the NDIS, and have their plan approved and implemented.

Specific service standards will be enforced for children with disability and participants requiring specialist disability accommodation and assistive technology. This will ensure that children in need of assistance will be provided with immediate support.

The introduction of the NDIS Participant Service Guarantee will commence on 1 July 2020 following a review of the NDIS Act in the second half of 2019. A key objective of this review is to streamline NDIS processes and cut red tape for participants and providers.

The NDIS Participant Service Guarantee will be developed and legislated in close consultation with people with disability, their families, carers and supporters, as well as state and territory governments.

The NDIA will be required to report against their performance under the new NDIS Participant Service Guarantee to the COAG Disability Reform Council.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman will be given additional resources of \$2 million to allow it to monitor the NDIA's performance against the Participant Service Guarantee timeframes, and to support NDIS participants pursuing complaints about time frames they have experienced.

## ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL DISABILITY GATEWAY TO SUPPORT ALL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

We recognise that the NDIS was never intended to be the only support provided to people with disability, their families or carers. There are more than 4.3 million Australians with disability, of whom 460,000 are expected to be eligible for the NDIS.

A re-elected Morrison Government will provide \$45 million over three years to establish a national disability information gateway for people with disability, their families and their carers.

The gateway will provide people with disability and their families with a one-stop shop to access up-to-date, relevant information, support and referral to assist them in making their own choices about the services and supports they use, and the activities, in which they engage in their communities.

The gateway will consist of a website, including a service finder similar to that available on the My Aged Care and Carer Gateway websites, and a national call centre via a dedicated 1800 number to assist people with disability and their families to locate and access services for themselves or the ones they love.

Establishing a national gateway will improve access to information and services for people with disability and their families, which is currently fragmented and difficult to navigate with services and supports spanning multiple sectors including health, housing, employment, transport and disability services.

For example, the gateway will assist people with disability to find a local advocacy services, a sporting team that meets the needs of their disability, disability related events and disability service providers.

The Gateway will utilise information and resources that will be developed as part of the NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) National Information Program.

## FURTHER ACTION TO IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

The Liberal and Nationals Coalition has already created 1.3 million jobs.

We have a plan to keep our economy strong and create 1.25 million more jobs over the next 5 years.

It is only through creating these jobs that people with disability will have real employment opportunities.

A re-elected Morrison Government will continue to support initiatives that boost employment for people with disability.

## INTRODUCE A NEW DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT TARGET FOR THE APS

A re-elected Morrison Government will lead by example by introducing a new 7 per cent employment target for people with disability across the Australian Public Service (APS) by 2025.

While the APS is a major employer across Australia, there has been a consistent decline in the recorded number of people with disability in the APS workforce, from 6.6 per cent in 1986.<sup>1</sup>

When Labor was last in Government the recorded employment of people with disability in the APS declined from 3.6 per cent in 2007 to 3.2 per cent in 2013.

Under the Coalition, we have already reversed this trend with the recorded employment of people with disability in the APS increasing back to 3.7 per cent in 2018.<sup>2</sup>

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While a number of initiatives are currently underway to support greater employment of people with disability in the APS, there is currently no target to drive significant cultural change.

A re-elected Morrison Government would therefore lead by example by implementing a target of 7 per cent recorded employment of people with disability across the APS by 2025.

We will task Departmental Secretaries and Agency heads with reviewing their employment policies and the target will form part of their key performance indicators.

We will also task the APS Commissioner with developing a new APS Disability Employment Strategy for 2019-2025, including a review of current recruitment and assessment processes to ensure they are not creating barriers to employment for people with disability, especially those with an intellectual disability or autism.

A number of state and territory governments have implemented employment targets for people with disability within their public service - Victoria with a target of 6 per cent by 2020, Queensland an 8 per cent target by 2022, and NSW wanting to boost public service disability employment from 2.7 per cent to 5.6 per cent by 2027.

A re-elected Morrison Government would also call on all other state, territory and local governments to set ambitious targets for employing people with disability.

## SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH AUTISM INTO EMPLOYMENT

A re-elected Morrison Government will provide \$2 million to support people with autism to find and keep a job, including a \$1.5 million national expansion of the successful Dandelion Program in partnership with DXC Technology.

The Morrison Government recognises that autism is the highest represented disability in the NDIS at almost 30 per cent, and a growing number of people with autism will be leaving school in the next five to ten years. These young people will need support to help their transition to the workplace.

Since 2014, DXC Technology has successfully delivered the DXC Dandelion Program, providing long term employment outcomes for approximately 100 people with autism in government and non-government workplaces. To date, the Dandelion Program has achieved a retention rate of around 92 per cent.

This collaborative partnership will leverage DXC's extensive experience in building careers for people on the autism spectrum – presenting the opportunity to extend this kind of program to the 164,000 Australians with autism.

As part of the partnership, a range of initiatives will be developed to support potential employers to integrate people with autism into the workforce and to become more disability confident and aware.

A re-elected Morrison Government will invest an additional \$500,000 for initiatives to encourage employers to become autism-confident. This will stimulate the widest possible take up of recruitment processes which are inclusive of people with autism and enable people with autism to work in an environment that accommodates their needs.

## THE CHOICE

The NDIS is one of the biggest social policy reforms in Australia's history.

It is important that we get it right.

Unfortunately, Labor's implementation of the NDIS was led more by political expediency than policy perfection.

A review of the NDIA's capabilities released in early 2014 found that "The Agency is like a plane that took off before it had been fully built and is being completed while it is in the air."

Labor has a dismal track record of implementation ambitious schemes - from home insulation schemes to its promise to 'end the double drop-off' which was disgracefully abandoned when a mere 38 of a promised 260 child care centres on school premises nationally had been built

If Labor wins government, it will likely do a poor job of implementing the continued roll out of the NDIS.

By building a strong economy and getting the budget back into balance, we have been able to fill the multibillion dollar funding gap left by the previous Labor Government without increasing taxes.

## COALITION



✓ Fully funding and delivering the NDIS.

✓ Rolling out the NDIS area by area, group by group, just as agreed with each state and territory.

✓ Keeping the NDIS financially sustainable and on budget.

✓ Increasing employment for people with disability in the public service.

## LABOR



✗ A funding gap of more than \$5 billion for the NDIS when it is fully rolled out from 2020/21, growing to almost \$7 billion a year over the next decade.

✗ Starting the NDIS trials a year ahead of the Productivity Commission's recommendation because it was desperate to meet a political timetable.

✗ Average NDIS package costs 30% higher than anticipated.

✗ Employment of people with disability declining from 3.6 per cent in 2007 to 3.2 per cent in 2013.

## COST

The Coalition will invest an additional \$22 million for our Plan to Support People with Disability.