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Media Release: NDIS Review threatens choice and control

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AFI has been joined by national activists and ACT Disabled Peoples Organisations welcoming the release of the long awaited report of the NDIS Review while expressing concerns about recommendations which reduce choice, control and agency of people with disability in the scheme.

AFI opposes any moves to force people to use registered providers and we share the concerns of Dr George Teleporos who says “forcing us to use registered providers is taking away rights to exercise choice and control in our supports. It destroys self management and the right of consumers to decide who we want in our homes providing intimate support. It’s a major step backwards and its not what we fought for. Government should reject this recommendation”

AFI also joined activists in expressing strong concerns about housing proposals that could force people into shared living arrangements. The review recommend that funding for participants requiring 24/7 living supports should typically be on the basis of those supports being shared with two other people. This will reduce choice and control and force people to live together in order to receive disability supports. We know that group homes are places where violence and abuse occurs and we have a long history of problems here in the ACT

According to disability activist and NDIS campaigner Sam Connor: “There are enormous risks inherent in forcing people with disability to share care, including forcing them to share housing. This is a direct breach of article 19 of the UNCRPD, especially given the issues raised around segregation and accommodation in housing at the Royal Commission.

“Most of the Disability Royal Commissioners recommended that group homes be phased out and called on the Australian Government and state and territory governments develop and implement a comprehensive roadmap to phase out group homes within the next 15 years. Instead of forcing more people into group homes government should implement this roadmap, including more accessible and affordable housing”, Sam Connor said.

ACT Down Syndrome Association Chief Executive Shannon Kolak also expressed

concerns about the NDIS Review recommending a new regime of needs assessments to determine Budgets: “we retain concerns, similar to concerns about the previous Governments independent assessments, about any plans to use what appear to be point in time functional assessments, whether from consultants or NDIS staff, to determine funding levels.

“People with disability are individuals with different goals, aspirations and priorities not a set of impairments. Assessments like this are incapable of capturing the variability of episodic disabilities. We know that the experience of people and families with intellectual disability is that some people present well on the assessment day but this does not capture the real level of need. A return to diagnostic supports substantially deviates from the commitment to a rights based scheme by the former Gillard Government.

“AFI cautiously welcomes the recommendations of the review which encourage additional investment in non NDIS supports and the GST carve out commitment by the States and Territories. However we are cautious about proposals to move some services, like home and community supports and personal assistance into a category of targeted foundational supports. Without an NDIS framework these critical supports could become capped and rationed again.

“We also cautiously welcome a focus on market stewardship and navigation in the report. One gap we have consistently identified is quality peer reviewed information and referral services to help people access quality information on goods, services, spaces, places, equipment and services plus room for consumers to review and comment on services. This should include a central directory of allied workers and accessible vendors, including builders, handymen, therapists and specialists”, Mr Wallace concluded.

This is a detailed and complex report and we will be spending time over the coming days and weeks developing a fulsome response. AFI set out our expectations for NDIS Reform in our What We Heard Reports launched last week and our submission to the review which can be found [here](#).

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