

# Media Release

1 November 2019

## Disability Leaders Lobby Local MPs

Representatives of the Illawarra Disability Alliance (IDA) met with Federal Members of Parliament, Sharon Bird and Stephen Jones today to hand over copies of letters which will be sent to the Prime Minister, Treasurer and various Ministers as well as to the CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency. The letters tackle key issues impacting the roll out and impact of the NDIS.

### 1. NDIS 'Underspend'

In a recent budget address, Treasurer Josh Frydenburg announced there had been a significant 'underspend' in the NDIS, and this had resulted in treasury returning a better economic outcome than predicted in the 2018 budget.

IDA members met with the Member for Cunningham and the Member for Whitlam to ask them to take their serious concerns to parliament.

"This is money that the taxpayers of Australia have invested in disability supports and making Australia a more inclusive and accessible place for everyone" said Nicky Sloan, CEO of The Community Industry Group. "There is much to be done and the members of the IDA feel strongly that it is just not appropriate that we are diverting these funds back to balance the books."

The letter points out that it was known that the NDIS would not be fully rolled out in the 2019 financial year meaning the government would benefit from this perceived "underspend" as it has been referred to by in his recent budget address.

The IDA letter states:

*"The \$3.78 billion underspend is not acceptable and should be invested in supporting people with disability and their families and communities around Australia as it was intended.*

*Accessible and affordable transport is a huge and growing problem for the implementation of the NDIS in all areas of Australia with regional and remote areas particularly badly affected.*

*The moral and ethical approach for the government of Australia to take when blessed with this NDIS underspend is quite plainly to invest in these areas of need."*

### 2. Transport

The second letter handed to Federal Members today concerned the Insufficiency of transport in NDIS plans.

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[Illawarradisabilityalliance.org](http://Illawarradisabilityalliance.org)

“Transport is a key enabler for people with disability to access the services, activities and supports in their NDIS plans” Ms Sloan said “However, we are finding that there is no consideration of the level of transport supports needed to meet the goals and outcomes of NDIS plans.”

Previously, disability service providers had been advised that participants could use their plans flexibly across core supports in relation to transport. This is in alignment with the NDIS philosophy of Choice and Control for the individual. However, the NDIS Price Guide 2019-20 makes it clear that if plans contain insufficient funds for transport, participants will be required to meet transport needs from their own personal finances.

“This decision not only demonstrates the government’s lack of clear policy around key elements of the NDIS” Nicky Sloan said “But it will also further disadvantages vulnerable people. Many people with disability simply do not have the personal finances necessary to ensure they are able to independently travel to access the services they vitally need.”

Both letters are authorised by members of the Illawarra Disability Alliance (IDA):

- Community Industry Group,
- The Disability Trust,
- The Flagstaff Group, Greenacres,
- Community Gateway,
- Northcott Disability Services,
- Life Without Barriers,
- Disability Services Australia,
- Care South,
- Cerebral Palsy Alliance,
- The Cram Foundation,
- Interchange Illawarra,
- Essential Employment,
- Illawarra Multicultural Services,
- Interchange Shoalhaven,
- Spinal Cord Injuries Australia and
- WEA Illawarra.

### **About the Illawarra Disability Alliance**

The Illawarra Disability Alliance is a group of not for profit disability specific providers working together collegially and collaboratively to deliver better outcomes for people with disability in the local community.

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**Inserted Photos Also Attached**



