

MEDIA RELEASE

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National report puts the case for revamping the disability services system

The Australian Government report 'Shut Out', released today, underlines the need for a national disability insurance scheme that entitles people with severe disability to support services, whatever the cause of their disability.

The report – which is illustrated with vivid personal accounts – compellingly summarises the results of extensive Australia-wide consultations that will inform the development of a National Disability Strategy.

A major theme in the report is the under-resourcing, inflexibility and disrepair of the disability services system. "The report echoes what people in the disability sector know all too well: the current system is complex to navigate, disjointed and chronically under-funded", said Dr Ken Baker, Chief Executive of National Disability Services, which represents more than 650 non-government organisations. "More administrative effort goes into rationing services than improving them."

The National Disability Strategy will be a whole-of-government approach that will give practical effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Australia.

"The Strategy will be an important and unprecedented opportunity to establish a sound foundation for the long-term support of people with disability and their engagement in all areas of Australian civic, economic, political and social life," said Dr Baker.

"The rights of many people with severe disability will remain an abstraction unless those people have guaranteed access to flexible responsive support services (including aids and equipment). A national disability insurance scheme would fix a major hole in Australia's safety net."

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