
**PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REPORT A WELCOME START
FOR DISABILITY CARE AND SUPPORT**

UnitingCare Australia welcomes the release today of the Productivity Commission's final report into disability care and support and the Prime Minister's endorsement of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Commenting shortly after the release of the report National Director, Lin Hatfield Dodds said: "Together with the aged care announcement earlier this week, these reforms signal that the Federal Government is stepping up to the social challenges of our time.

"We welcome the Government's intention to take this to COAG and make disability care and support a priority of all governments through a special select council on disability reform. The creation of an advisory committee, including experienced community representatives, is a demonstration of the partnerships needed for a better deal for people with disabilities.

"The expertise and commitment of communities and carers has built the momentum for this reform, and this experience will be essential for the successful design and implementation of the changes."

The Productivity Commission has proposed a 7-year timeline for the full implementation of the Scheme, beginning with a trial in Victoria in 2014. Over time the Scheme would then be widened to include the other States and Territories.

Ms Hatfield Dodds noted that, "The true value of an NDIS will be seen in the lives of people with disabilities, in their communities and in their interactions with services. This is where we need to focus our energies.

"People with disabilities have struggled for long enough. It's time for us to stand together as a community and say that we will no longer accept the unfair, rationing- and crisis-driven system we currently have.

"This Scheme will change not only the lives and experiences of people with disabilities, but will make Australia a more equitable and just society."

Ms Hatfield Dodds concluded, "UnitingCare Australia and the UnitingCare network is committed to positive change in the disability sector and look forward to working with the State, Territory and Federal Government to implement this much needed reform."

The UnitingCare network is one of the largest providers of social services in Australia delivering care to over 2 million people through 1,300 sites in remote, regional and metropolitan communities. UnitingCare has 35,000 staff and 24,000 volunteers