



Media release

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The Honourable Coralee O'Rourke

Queensland Regions get early access to the NDIS

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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Queensland regions get early access to the NDIS

Hundreds of Queenslanders with disability in Ipswich, Bundaberg and Rockhampton will get earlier access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) thanks to a decision of the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments.

The two Governments are bringing forward the NDIS start date in the next three regions to roll out, to make the most of unused capacity in the first Queensland regions to transition to the NDIS.

"While the NDIS roll out is going well in Queensland so far, we are seeing fewer access requests than we expected in the regions where the scheme is already operating, which gives us the ability to bring forward access to state clients in the next regions in line," Social Services Minister, Christian Porter, said.

"This decision balances a steady pace with the desire to help people as early as we can, without jeopardising the quality of NDIS plans. We have the resources in place to bring more Queenslanders into the scheme, starting with existing state clients, and today's change will accelerate that access process.

"Today's announcement demonstrates the shared commitment of all ministers to bring people with significant disability into the NDIS as early as possible, while maintaining a careful eye on the systems and planning processes that underpin the NDIS.

"NDIS staff are continuing their outreach in existing roll out areas, to make sure that everyone who is eligible for the NDIS knows how to request access – and of course because this is an uncapped scheme, if people are eligible they will get access to the NDIS."

Assistant Minister for Disability Services, Jane Prentice, said today's change is great news for people with disability and their families in the next NDIS roll out areas.

"I look forward to the NDIS continuing its productive roll out in Queensland, and I'm pleased to bring today's good news to state clients in Ipswich, Bundaberg and Rockhampton," Mrs Prentice said.

"From today, the NDIA will begin bringing forward the start date for the NDIS to roll-out in Ipswich.

While the new start date is initially focused on bringing forward access for existing Queensland Government disability clients, other eligible people don't have long to wait – we expect all eligible people in Ipswich to have entered the scheme by the end of 2017.

"We are bringing forward the start date for existing state clients in Bundaberg to September rather than October 2017, and in Rockhampton it will come forward to November 2017 rather than January next year. Other eligible people in both Bundaberg and Rockhampton will have entered the Scheme by June 2018.

"The NDIS is one of the largest social policy reforms in Australia's history – it is already empowering Queenslanders with disability, helping them fulfil their aspirations and participate in community life.

"Across Queensland, people are excited about the start of the NDIS and the impact it will have on their lives. I am delighted to help people in Ipswich, Bundaberg and Rockie feel those benefits even sooner."

More than 5,000 Queenslanders have already joined the NDIS and have their plan in place. However, demand in the first roll out regions – Townsville, Mackay and Toowoomba – has been lower than expected so far, prompting governments to bring forward the roll out of the NDIS to people waiting for the NDIS in other regions.

Queensland's Disability Services Minister, Coralee O'Rourke, said the Queensland Government had proposed the change to start dates to ensure Queenslanders get access to the NDIS as soon as possible.

"For those living in Ipswich, Bundaberg and Rockhampton, already receiving Queensland Government disability support and care, today's announcement means you can join the NDIS early," Ms O'Rourke said.

"Over the coming months, staff from the National Disability Insurance Agency or NDIA will be in touch with hundreds of existing Queensland clients in Ipswich, Bundaberg and Rockhampton, helping them to request access and join this important scheme.

"To request access to the NDIS, Queenslanders in the roll out areas can visit www.ndis.gov.au or speak to NDIS staff by calling 1800 800 110.

"The NDIA and Queensland Government will be working collaboratively to ensure that disability service providers are aware of, and ready for, this change."

Dates for subsequent areas of Queensland remain unchanged. At full scheme in 2019, it is anticipated around 91,000 Queenslanders will receive support under the NDIS.

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