

From: Media Statements QLD statements@qld.gov.au
Subject: State's most vulnerable benefit with early NDIS launch and seniors boost
Date: 14 July 2015 10:41 pm
To: aemscott@icloud.com



Media release

Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland
The Honourable Coralee O'Rourke

State's most vulnerable benefit with early NDIS launch and seniors boost

The Palaszczuk Government has announced funding of close to \$2 million for an early launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in the 2015-16 State Budget.

The launch forms part of the \$1.547 billion 2015-16 Disability Services budget, an increase of \$82 million from the previous financial year.

This is in addition to \$52 million for Queensland seniors and pensioner concessions in 2015-16 and \$2 million over four years for seniors' wellbeing, participation and safety.

Minister for Disability Services and Seniors Coralee O'Rourke said establishing an early NDIS launch in Queensland was a key election commitment, after Queenslanders missed out on a trial under the LNP.

"The NDIS is the biggest social reform since Medicare, changing the lives of people with disability and creating up to 13,000 jobs in the state's disability sector," Mrs O'Rourke said.

"It's essential Queenslanders are ready for this transition, and an early launch will allow us to test the roll-out process and see how the scheme will operate in Queensland," she said.

"This will give us vital information about how we can transition to the full NDIS across the rest of the state from 1 July 2016."

Mrs O'Rourke said the Budget also recognised the importance of suitable accommodation for people with disability, which the Federal Coalition Budget did not address.

"We've allocated almost \$25 million for a range of initiatives that will provide housing accommodation options for people with disability across the state," she said.

"We recognise that the NDIS will increase the demand for affordable and appropriate housing for people with disability, which is already under pressure.

"Despite the NDIS starting in July next year, we still don't have answers from the Federal Government about how funding available will be used to provide disability housing in Queensland.

"We will fight to get the right housing options for Queenslanders with disability."

Mrs O'Rourke said \$2 million over four years would go towards rebuilding the Office for Seniors after it was cut by the former LNP Government, establishing a One Stop Shop for seniors and establishing the Advisory Taskforce for Residential Transition for Aging Queenslanders, delivering on election commitments

Queenslanders, delivering on election commitments.

"We value the significant contribution seniors make in our community, which is why we are investing in important initiatives to support them," she said.

"We have also announced that \$347 million has been set aside for pensioner concessions, to make sure our seniors don't bear the brunt of Federal Coalition pensioner cuts."

Highlights of the 2015-16 Disability Services Budget include:

- \$1.9 million for the early launch of the NDIS in Queensland
- \$9 million to build or upgrade accommodation for people with an intellectual or cognitive disability and severely challenging behaviours
- \$6.6 million to continue the Elderly Parent Carer Innovation Trial aimed at assisting elderly parent carers to organise accommodation for an adult son or daughter who has a disability and they can no longer care for them
- \$6 million to build or purchase supported accommodation for people with disability living in inappropriate settings
- \$3.1 million for supported accommodation in Cairns, Townsville, Wynnum and Banyo.

Media contact: Minister O'Rourke's office 0408 317 992

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