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Sustainable NDIS reforms require a strong regional focus

Mallee Family Care has welcomed the Australian Government's commitment to long-term sustainability of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), including strengthened measures to address fraud and waste, while cautioning that reforms must not inadvertently disadvantage rural and regional communities.

CEO Teresa Jayet said ensuring the integrity and sustainability of the NDIS is critical to protecting the Scheme for future generations of Australians with disability.

"The NDIS is a vital support for people with disability and their families and we support sensible measures that strengthen its sustainability," Ms Jayet said. "Action to tackle fraud, reporting and poor-quality providers is necessary to maintain community confidence and ensure funding reaches those who need it most."

Ms Jayet said, however, that reforms must be carefully designed to reflect the realities of service delivery in regional and rural areas, where provider markets are already thin and choice can be limited.

"In communities across regional Australia, including the areas we serve, the NDIS market is often fragile," she said.

"We must ensure that efforts to tighten regulation and reshape the market do not reduce access to quality providers or unintentionally drive services out of these communities."

Mallee Family Care is calling for genuine and ongoing consultation with rural and regional communities as reforms are developed and implemented.

"Place matters," Ms Jayet said. "Policy settings that work in metropolitan areas don't always translate to regional contexts. Engaging directly with local communities, providers and participants will be essential to getting these reforms right."

MFC also welcomed the Government's commitment to establish the Inclusive Communities Fund, aimed at rebuilding community-based supports and strengthening opportunities for genuine participation.

"The Inclusive Communities Fund is a positive step, particularly if it is designed with flexibility to support place-based approaches," Ms Jayet said. "Local organisations are best placed to understand community needs and deliver supports that foster real inclusion and connection."



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Ms Jayet emphasised that investment in community capacity must complement NDIS reforms to ensure people who may not access the Scheme, or whose supports change, are not left without assistance.

“A strong NDIS must sit alongside strong community supports,” she said. “This is especially important in regional areas, where community organisations play a critical role in filling gaps and connecting people.”

Mallee Family Care looks forward to working with government and stakeholders to ensure reforms strengthen the NDIS while delivering equitable outcomes for all Australians, regardless of where they live.

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