



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Catholic Bishops support proposal for National Disability Insurance Scheme Media Release July 5, 2011

The Catholic Bishops of Australia support the recommendations from the Productivity Commissions draft report for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), a scheme which aims to present a new paradigm of service delivery for people with disability and their families.

The Catholic Bishops believe that people with disability should be able to participate fully in Australian society and therefore support the recommendations for a NDIS, a scheme that is hoped will create more opportunities and effective services for people with disability.

In a short statement, the Bishops said that the current national approach to disability services is crisis-driven, welfare-based and lacks dignity. The new scheme intends to ensure better accessibility, choice and control over service delivery.

Chairman of the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life Bishop Eugene Hurley said that it is critical that social justice is taken into consideration in this area and the proposed scheme could deliver this to families.

“The proposed scheme will ensure that there is funding for essential care for people with disabilities including respite, therapy, aids, equipment, home modification and access to community care and education”, he said.

“Government is required to uphold the rights of all its citizens, including persons with disability by acting on existing policies, particularly those relating to discrimination and exclusion of persons with disability as a marginalised group”, said Bishop Hurley.

Ms. Michele Castagna, Chair of the Australian Catholic Disability Council said that the Council fully supports the Bishops statement.

“The time for change is now. People with disability need to be seen as truly equal citizens”, she said.

One of the expected outcomes of the new National Disability Insurance Scheme will be to promote respect for the inherent dignity of people living with disability and their families.

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