

Maximising lifetime opportunities through the NDIS

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The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has been described as a landmark reform, a once-in-a-generation opportunity and an idea whose time has come. But when the NDIS commences in July of this year in launched sites in the Hunter Area of New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and the Barwon Region of Victoria, what will it mean for individuals with disability, family members and carers? How will the service provider sector respond to the gradual transition from block-funded arrangements and program-related activity to individualised arrangements, personal budgets and new forms of self-direction and self-management of support plans in the future? How will the NDIS Launch Transition Agency operate during Stage 1 of the NDIS launch and how do we see the development of the NDIS over the next five years as we move from launch to the full scheme envisioned by the Council of Australian Governments' NDIS agreement reached on 7 December 2012?

These are just some of the questions that drive and inform the development of the NDIS, the Launch Transition Agency and the many communities of interest who are watching, as well as contributing to, the preparations for launch of the NDIS on 2 July. Dougie Herd, one of the senior managers in the national office of the NDIS Launch Transition Agency, will give an update on preparations and arrangements for launch and consider some of the design and development challenges that will need to be addressed as the NDIS looks beyond launch towards the roll-out of the full scheme for more than 410 000 individuals with disability living in every community of Australia.

Of critical importance to the successful development of the NDIS will be its commitment to ensure that viable, sustainable and flexible support arrangements are within the reach of all eligible participants of the NDIS. That means choice and control over one's 'reasonable and necessary' supports must be made real wherever people live in Australia. The question is 'how'?