

## NDIS history, design, progress, adaptation, challenges and opportunities

### **Bruce Bonyhady**

National Disability Insurance Agency Board

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the most significant economic and social policy reform for 30 years. The NDIS was first discussed at the 2020 Summit held in 2008, when it was identified as a 'big idea'. It then ran the gauntlet of reviews by the Productivity Commission and Commonwealth and State governments, as the evidence for disability reform was carefully analysed and reviewed, before winning the unanimous support of all governments, all political parties and the broader Australian community. It involves a transformation of disability services from welfare to insurance, and is now being trialled in seven sites, including in the Barkly Shire in the NT (for people with disabilities of all ages), and in the APY Lands (for children). The Scheme is on time, on budget and participant satisfaction is very high. When the NDIS is fully implemented it is expected that in excess of 400,000 people with severe disabilities will be participants and will receive supports based on their individual needs. Total disability spending will more than double in the next five years to around \$22 billion in 2019–20. The implementation of the Scheme in rural and remote areas is particularly challenging, because choice and control of supports by participants and, hence, a contestable market for disability services is a key element of its design. However, this also implies new and very significant opportunities to develop local workforces and for business in allied sectors, such as health.