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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**ABBOTT MUST GUARANTEE NO CUTS, NO DELAYS TO THE NDIS**

Tony Abbott must immediately give an iron clad promise that he will not cut or delay the NDIS.

This week in the Parliament Joe Hockey deliberately tried to undermine the NDIS, and by the looks of it, he is at it again today.

The report on the front of today's *Australian* is an outrageous re-hash of the Abbott Government's attempts last month to undermine the NDIS by deliberately misrepresenting the facts.

Quite clearly, this is all part of Joe Hockey's strategy to soften the ground for cuts in this May's budget.

People with disability, their carers and families have waited their whole lives for the NDIS. Many of them fought for decades for the NDIS to become a reality.

People with disability, their carers and families do not deserve to hear their Government constantly try and undermine its success, only months after it began.

Already, more than 2,500 people with disability are benefitting from the NDIS – plus the many carers and families who are benefitting, too.

Now is not the time for Tony Abbott to renege on his promise to deliver the NDIS. Now is the time to assure people with disability the NDIS will be delivered in full and on time, as promised.

The Abbott Government owes it to people with disability and all Australians to fight any moves to undermine or cast doubt on the future of the NDIS.

If the Prime Minister is as committed to the NDIS as he says he is, he should immediately guarantee there will be no cuts or delays to the NDIS, and tell his senior ministers to get on with the job of delivering it.

People with disability are counting on him.

### The facts

- The National Disability Insurance Agency's second quarterly report, released on 13 February, showed some very positive signs.
  - The report showed that more than 2,500 people are already benefiting from the NDIS since it launched last year.
  - It also showed that people's individual plans are being finalised faster than they were in the first quarter, and at a lower cost.
  - It reported that participant satisfaction with the scheme is very high.
- The bulk of the variance in the numbers in the report and the bilateral agreements is in South Australia – it is a matter of public record that the relevant South Australian department strongly disputes the numbers printed in the report.
- The report clearly states that extrapolating the numbers in the report to make assumptions on full scheme costs is not possible at this stage.
- It shows that at December 2013, \$90 million of support had been committed to people currently participating in the scheme, with \$70 million to be paid in 2013-14. The total amount of funding allocated in this period is \$145 million.
- Chair of the NDIS Board, Mr Bruce Bonyhady AM, told ABC Radio National on 22 February 2014 that the early costs of the scheme are particularly affected by the fact that people with the most severe and profound disability are being prioritised first, as intended:

“It's important to recognise this is very early days, we've just had something like 2,600 people come into the scheme. The early costs are particularly affected by the nature of the disabilities of those people that are coming into the scheme.

There's considerable evidence that many of the high support clients are coming into the scheme.”

[Mr Bruce Bonyhady AM, ABC Radio National, 22 February 2014]

**END**

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