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1,400 NDIS participants waiting months to be discharged from hospitals

Across Australia, some 1,400 NDIS participants are waiting an average of 160 days, equal to almost six months, to be discharged from hospitals despite being ready to go home or into appropriate special accommodation.

Bill Shorten, the Minister overseeing the National Disability Insurance Scheme, says the public hospitals are becoming stuck by "bureaucratic glue" stopping healthy patients from leaving.

"Bureaucratic decision-making appears to be slowing down the process of discharging patients rather than a lack of appropriate accommodation options," Mr Shorten said on Melbourne radio this week.

Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia, Ms Monique Earsman, said today that the logjam of NDIS patients in public hospitals was one of many issues facing the disability scheme.

"The \$30 billion system which delivers services to more than 500,000 people is failing to provide value for money and the best possible services to clients.

"This latest issue, which is costing taxpayers about \$2300 a day to keep a single NDIS patient in hospital when they should be at home, is just one of many issues that need to be addressed as part of Labor's proposed review of the NDIS," Ms Earsman said.

Other issues of major concern within the NDIS include ensuring:

- Disability support staff receive the respect they deserve by the NDIS system, enabling providers to employ staff permanently rather than casually. The system requires service providers to employ staff as casuals to avoid making a loss; this outcome is unacceptable and undervalues care workers' work.
- Costs associated with compliance with the NDIA and NDIS Commission must be recognised in funding arrangements.
- A level playing field between registered and unregistered providers, and proper avenues for complaint resolution when unregistered providers fail to provide an appropriate standard of care.

Minister Shorten said that "nothing had prepared him" for the state of the NDIS he inherited after Labor's win at the May federal election.

He said that if a patient is stabilised they are better off being at home or in an appropriate special accommodation, rather than in an expensive hospital bed leaving them exposed to other illnesses.

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