

## Catholic Social Services Australia Urges Respect for Participants' Dignity at the heart of NDIS Reforms

22 April 2026

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) has expressed concern following the reforms to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) announced by Minister Mark Butler at the National Press Club today. While acknowledging the importance of ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Scheme, CSSA says the dignity, agency, and wellbeing of people with disability must remain central to all reform decisions.

CSSA Director of Policy and Advocacy, Ms Carmel Sefian, said the Minister's comments highlighted an ongoing tension within the NDIS between preserving the original vision of choice and control for participants with significant or lifelong support needs, and the growing pressure to contain the Scheme's costs for future generations.

"The Minister rightly describes the NDIS as 'one of Australia's great human rights achievements' however, reforms aimed at stabilising expenditure must not undermine the principles of dignity, inclusion, and individual support that sit at the heart of the Scheme" Ms Sefian said.

The Government's intention to reduce the number of plans undergoing unscheduled assessment only under "exceptional circumstances" expected under the upcoming Budget is an immediate concern. Disability supports can be unpredictable. Limiting reassessments risks people becoming stuck with plans that are inadequate for their needs and delays for essential supports.

Ms Sefian stressed the personal cost of narrowing eligibility and tightening access.

"For many, losing NDIS support means losing critical assistance that enables them to get out of bed, to communicate, to work, to learn, and to connect with others. It means increased isolation, greater reliance on families already stretched to breaking point, and a diminished quality of life."

CSSA said it is deeply conscious of the anxiety and uncertainty these reforms will create for an estimated 160,000 Australians with disability and their families who may be affected by changes to Scheme access and participation.

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“At a time when States and the broader sector are also seeking clarity around the rollout of the Thriving Kids initiative, we are calling on the Government to provide greater detail about how these latest reforms will be implemented and what safeguards will exist for people currently relying on support” Ms Sefian said.

“People deserve certainty, clarity, and reassurance that their dignity and wellbeing will remain protected throughout this process.”

“Meaningful reform must remain grounded in the original promise of the NDIS” she concluded.

CSSA said it remains committed to advocating for policies that uphold the inherent dignity of every person and promote the common good for all Australians.

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## About CSSA:

Catholic Social Services Australia is the national peak body for Catholic social service providers. Its network of 42 member agencies delivers essential services to over 500,000 vulnerable Australians across all states and territories. CSSA advocates for compassionate socio-economic policies that prioritise the common good and social justice.

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