



## MEDIA RELEASE

### People with disability step up campaign for essential funding of disability advocacy services

Disability advocacy services are stepping up their campaign for permanent funding with the announcement of a big rally on February 24 to support disability advocacy organisations and the release today of a new toolkit to help people with disability to go and visit their local MP.

“People with disability across NSW are gearing up for the biggest campaign yet, to ensure that our advocacy, representative and information services can continue beyond next year,” said Dean Price, Senior Policy Officer, People with Disability Australia, on behalf of the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance

“Today, we’re releasing a [new kit to support people with disability](#) and their families when they go and visit their local NSW MP to talk about why disability advocacy is so important to them.”

The NSW government has shut down the disability services sector, closing down the Department of Ageing, Disability and Homecare (AHDC) in June 2018. This leaves 90% of people with disability in NSW with no access to disability services, including advocacy.

“Disability advocacy funding, for most organisations, will come to an end in less than 18 months from now, but some organisations are facing losing their funding this year. By cutting this funding, the NSW government is neglecting a core piece of disability support infrastructure. It will create a giant gaping hole for millions of people with disability (including family, friends and carers) to fall through if the NSW Government doesn’t change its mind,” said Mr Price.

“The effects of funding cuts on our service are catastrophic. The Bathurst, Coffs Harbour and Armidale offices will close, with six advocates lost. The Newcastle office will lose two advocates. Each of these advocates helps at least 100 people with disability every year,” said Mark Grierson, CEO of Disability Advocacy NSW.

“Essential advocacy support and decades of experience and expertise will be lost, including in regional and rural areas. The NSW Government won’t be able to call on that expertise to guide future policy for people with disability.”

“The NSW Government is ignoring the advice of the recent comprehensive parliamentary inquiry into the NDIS implementation which recommended that funding for advocacy and representation services continues beyond 2020,” said Mr Grierson.

The new kit, launched today, contains a guide for people with disability for asking for a meeting with their local MP, including Easy Read material.

“We are gearing up for the big Sydney rally on Sunday February 24, and will be visiting NSW Government MPs in the weeks ahead, to get their support for our vital services,” said Mr Price.

“Our services need \$20m a year for these essential services, which is a drop in the ocean of NSW’s budget.”

**More information:**

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**About Stand By Me:**

The Stand by Me campaign is run by a coalition of 22 disability advocacy, information and representation organisations in NSW. For more information visit the [Stand By Me website](#).