



MEDIA RELEASE

Vital support for preventing violence against people with disability left unfunded

Whilst the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance (The Alliance) welcomes the establishment of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner by the NSW government last night, and the role they will play in safeguarding people with disability, the Commission can only work to stop violence against people with disability if both the Commission itself and independent disability advocacy, information and peak representative services are fully and adequately funded.

“We are concerned that people with disability in NSW will have no way of reaching the new Commissioner when disability advocacy, representation and information services close, some as soon as in a few weeks, the rest of the sector from June 2020” stated Serena Ovens, convener of the Alliance.

“Our services, many run by people with disability, are connected into our communities at the grassroots, and are trusted by people with disability. We support people with disability every day to tell their stories of violence and abuse, and to get justice and have a voice and agency in their lives.”

“Last night, the NSW Government missed an opportunity to recognise the obvious support of so many sides of the House for the crucial role that disability advocacy services play in preventing violence against people with disability, and our key role in supporting the work of the new Commissioner.”

“There has never been a time when disability advocacy services have been needed more in NSW with the establishment of the new Commissioner and the upcoming Royal Commission into violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. By leaving the disability advocacy sector in NSW with no funding certainty the Minister is turning his back on people with disability in NSW and their families.”

A commitment to permanent, ongoing funding for NSW’s disability advocacy organisations is a priority and must be secured urgently. The Minister has signalled a review of disability advocacy services but we already know is that disability advocacy services in NSW do a lot with very little. The sector is underfunded and needs more funds to meet the needs of people with disability and their families and it needs funding certainty to plan for the future.

To provide this funding certainty, we call on the NSW Government to extend our funding for the next four years, so that we can work with the Government on this review without compromising on the full range of vital services and support for people with disability in NSW. Without extending our funding, people with disability will be left without a voice, and without organisations that represent us.

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