



## New Commissioner welcome, but will need disability advocacy

People with disability, and their organisations, welcome the appointment of the Hon Robert Fitzgerald AM as the new NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner.

“We are pleased that a person as experienced as Commissioner Fitzgerald has been appointed to this vital new role of Ageing and Disability Commissioner,” said Serena Ovens, Convenor of the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance.

“However, we are strongly concerned that the funding allocated to the Commissioner isn’t adequate to do their work in preventing violence and abuse of people with disability in NSW.”

“We are also concerned that people with disability in NSW will have no way of reaching the new Commissioner if disability advocacy, representation and information services close, some likely as soon as in a few weeks, the rest of the sector from June 2020” said Ms Ovens. “The legislation to establish the Commissioner also means that there will be a rushed and underfunded review of disability advocacy, information and representative organisations in NSW, at a time when we don’t have any security of funding or future.”

“People with disability have to have a say about what happens to us in NSW, and this hasty review puts huge strain on our organisations.”

The planned review of disability advocacy services has a deadline of 31 December 2019 and will be completed by the new Commissioner using their existing funds.

“This review needs time and resources to be done properly, and we need stability during the review period. We are calling on the NSW Government to roll over our funding for at least two years, to give the Commissioner time to do the review, while giving people with disability surety that their organisations will still be there.”

“The upcoming Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation, and the ongoing challenges with the NDIS highlight how important it is for people with disability to have independent, stable organisations, many run by people with disability.”

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