



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Families and Social Services

THE HON SARAH HENDERSON MP

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services

MEDIA RELEASE

27 March 2019

Increased access to Specialist Disability Accommodation for NDIS participants

Changes to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rules are set to improve people's access to Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) under the \$22 billion scheme.

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher said the changes will remove barriers to SDA funding for NDIS participants, boosting access to SDA and allowing it to be placed in plans sooner.

"Currently 10,975 people are benefiting from SDA in their NDIS plans, which is estimated to rise to 28,000 at full scheme," Mr Fletcher said.

"SDA provides accommodation for NDIS participants with an extreme functional impairment or very high support needs who require specialist-housing solutions.

With all state and territory governments now on board, the first phase of SDA reforms can take effect.

"Changes to the *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Specialist Disability Accommodation) Rules 2016* coming into effect today will give NDIS participants more choice and control over the type and location of their specialist accommodation.

"NDIS participants will no longer have to exhaust other options before they can receive SDA funding in their plans.

"The changes will also clarify whether a participant is eligible for SDA and the type of accommodation they may be funded for, expediting plan approvals.

"These changes provide the necessary backing to the immediate reforms the Government began making in February and respond to recommendations of the Disability Reform Council in December 2018," Mr Fletcher said.

Assistant Minister Henderson for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services welcomed the reforms.

“The boost to access and improved certainty in the SDA funding stream will stimulate construction and supply in the SDA market, creating more diverse accommodation options for NDIS participants,” Ms Henderson said.

“The introduction of upfront inclusion of SDA in participants’ plans will also be a clear signal to the market that there is a demand for SDA stock they are considering building.

“Where there is not a suitable dwelling, participants will be able to go into the market and commission the construction of a home that suits their needs.”

Ms Henderson said this was only the first tranche of important improvements to SDA arrangements.

“The next stage of legislative amendments will occur by July 2019 to further improve participants’ choice and control by removing restrictions that make it more difficult for some families to live together,” Ms Henderson said.

ENDS

Media contact:

Minister Fletcher: Brooke Leembruggen 0447 743 835 | brooke.leembruggen@dss.gov.au

Assistant Minister Henderson: Bree Willsmore 0475 975 778 | bree.willsmore@dss.gov.au