**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Disability groups say NDIS changes take people with disability back to the past**

Today, in a blistering speech, Kevin Stone, CEO of VALID, said the proposed changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) do not have the best interests of people with disabilities or their families at heart.

“The NDIS is at risk of turning people with a disability and families, who have been the Scheme’s greatest supporter and most important ally, into a desperate and angry enemy,” said Mr Stone.

“The NDIS can dress it up in all sorts of clever ways, but the bottom line is that they are bent on dismantling the Scheme that we fought for. In many ways, what we’re fighting is the tide of a dark history, coming back to haunt people with disabilities and their families.”

Kevin Stone has been the CEO of VALID for over 30 years and was one of the key campaigners for the introduction of the NDIS.

“More than ten years ago now, we rallied in support of the NDIS. We were fighting for a disability support system that would live up to the vision of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A system that would create equality of opportunity for all Australians with disabilities,” said Mr Stone.

Catherine McAlpine, CEO of Inclusion Australia, the national peak body for people with intellectual disability and their families, agrees, and urges the NDIS to halt these changes now.

“People with intellectual disability and their families are among the strongest supporters of the NDIS. We need the Scheme to be here for the long term, and for the NDIS to make sure that people with intellectual disability can have real choices about their lives.”

“The proposed changes to the NDIS will significantly disadvantage people with intellectual disability, and take away their right to have an equal life,” said Ms McAlpine.

VALID, a member of Inclusion Australia, says that the NDIS and Minister Linda Reynolds must listen to people with intellectual disability and their families.

“There are very few people working at the NDIA, or in government now, who remember the campaigns and rallies of the past, so let me remind you. We will not stand by and watch this happen. We will not be bullied or bought off. People with disabilities and their families will come together across the country and we will fight you,” said Mr Stone.

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