



**Motor Neurone Disease Week 1-7 May 2011**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **MND Australia urges support for National Disability Insurance Scheme**

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Australia is calling on the Australian Parliament to adopt a National Disability Insurance Scheme to improve the nation's disability services and support for people with debilitating and rapidly progressive, incurable conditions, such as MND.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) campaign seeks to introduce a new national safety net, akin to Medicare and compulsory superannuation, for anyone who is born with a disability or becomes severely disabled through illness or injury. It would cover the cost of aids and equipment, home modification, personal care and respite services. It would empower people with a disability to purchase the services they require through a package of NDIS funding following an assessment of their needs.

National Executive Director of MND Australia, Carol Birks says, a national support scheme is critical for people diagnosed with MND. As MND progresses, people need fast access to services that can support basic daily living, such as mobility, communication, feeding and breathing. With no cure for MND in sight, effective services and support are essential.

“People living with a disability need access to better support and assistance and the proposed NDIS certainly addresses a lot of the issues, particularly around funding and timely access to assessment and services. It would make a huge difference to the MND community,” she says.

Ms Birks says that while the draft scheme is a positive step forward, there are gaps for those who acquire a disability after the age of 65.

“The Productivity Commission draft report states that the needs of those who acquire a disability after the pension age would be best met by the aged care system. Separating these services isn't the best approach. In fact, most older people with progressive neurological diseases will need services from both systems to meet their care and support needs,” she says.

Ms Birks says support should be made available based on a person's identified needs – not their age.

“For the NDIS to be truly supportive of people with disabilities such as MND, NDIS assessors, case managers and service providers will need to understand the progression of a person's disabilities, and be able to plan and provide appropriate, timely support on a case-by-case basis,” she says.

### **About Motor Neurone Disease Awareness Week 1-7 May 2011**

MND is an incurable and devastating disease that robs the body of its limb function, ability to eat, talk and breathe, while a person's senses and mind remain intact. On average, it kills some 10 Australians each week.

During MND Week 1 – 7 May 2011, all Australians are being encouraged to help in the fight to understand the causes, provide care and find a cure for this devastating disease. People can show their support by:

- Donating funds to MND associations to support care and research into the cause and cure  
[www.mndaust.asn.au](http://www.mndaust.asn.au)
- Buying a blue cornflower – a symbol of hope – through MND State Associations by phoning 1800 777 175
- Getting involved with State MND associations, which provide vital services and links to support, information, coordinated care, respite and equipment to assist people to live better for longer.
- Responding to the NDIS draft report before 30 April by making a submission to the Productivity Commission
- Supporting the MND Australia national NDIS Call to Action - [www.mndaust.asn.au/mnd-week/](http://www.mndaust.asn.au/mnd-week/) and the Every Australian Counts campaign <http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/>

Fundraising or awareness raising events are being held throughout Australia during MND Week with Blue Cornflower Day on Friday 6 May.

**For further information, please contact Anna Anderson or Julie Morgan on (03) 9696 5060 or email [aanderson@jmm.com.au](mailto:aanderson@jmm.com.au) or visit, [www.mndaust.asn.au](http://www.mndaust.asn.au)**