



MEDIA RELEASE

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Focus ACT sees greater improvement to the lives of people with disability in the ACT through the NDIS

Focus ACT, a local Canberra not for profit that has been supporting people with intellectual disability for over 26 years, is seeing great improvements to the lives of the people it supports through the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS is new way of providing support for Australians with disability, their families and carers. The scheme supports people with disability to build skills and capability so they can participate in the community and employment. It has been introduced gradually throughout the ACT in several steps based on ages and stages since 2014.

“We have had numerous positive experiences due to the introduction of the NDIS,” said Torrien Lau, Chief Executive, Focus ACT.

“Many of our service users are happier, more self-motivated and engaging more within the local community. The NDIS is definitely a contributor to that success,” continued Torrien.

Focus ACT supports people with intellectual disability to find a place to live and manage their daily lives in the community. It is a local non-profit organisation and one of the largest in-home care providers in Canberra.

Last week Focus ACT celebrated with their annual Christmas party where four of their service users were presented with awards recognising the improvements made to their lives of late - all significant improvements which Torrien says are in part due to better funding through the NDIS.

“The previous funding model didn’t enable us to provide as many services as we are able to now. We now have more money to do more things. And it’s just fabulous to see our clients reaping the benefits of our greater services,” Torrien continued.

“Our support model focusses on working with clients and not for clients - enabling them to hone their skills in everyday tasks and engaging with the community. Our staff focus on skill building and training, assisting clients to build confidence and achieve goals set out in their NDIS plans,” Torrien added.

Narelle Hargreaves, Official Visitor for Disability in the ACT, has the role of visiting several places that care for people with a disability, and Focus ACT manages a number of homes that she visits. Narelle says she has found Focus’ staff to be caring and supportive of the people in their care.

“Many opportunities are provided for the clients to access and engage in many community activities and programs which is very encouraging,” said Narelle.

“Since the introduction of the NDIS, I sense that more opportunities are being provided for the clients. Things like them being able to make visits to the National Museum of Australia, Parliament House, The National Gallery of Australia...together with the love they have of a coffee at the local shops and shopping centres,” continued Narelle.

Torrien says Focus’ commitment to workforce engagement is also a contributing factor to giving their clients a better life.

“Focus ACT’s workforce engagement is different than other care providers. We put an emphasis on our workplace culture and believe that if we treat our staff very well, our staff will treat our clients very well and everything else will fall into place.

“We currently have 70 staff, some who have been working for Focus for more than 15 years. It’s a stable, committed workforce which enables us to provide consistency of support and build excellent relationships with the people we support and their families,” Torrien continued.

“We believe people are capable of achieving a fulfilling lifestyle, and all people should have opportunities to explore their independence,” Torrien concluded.

For more information on Focus ACT, go to www.focusact.org For more information on the NDIS in the ACT visit <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/our-sites/ACT.html>

For more information, images or to arrange an interview, please contact Lauren Griffiths at Threesides on 0417 409 264 or lauren.griffiths@threesides.com.au