

MEDIA RELEASE MEDIA RELEASE MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 12:30pm 29 June 2015

NSW Ombudsman

Report of the deaths of people with disability

The NSW Ombudsman, Bruce Barbour, tabled a report to Parliament today on his reviews of the deaths in 2012 and 2013 of 239 people with disability who lived in residential care.

The report identifies important actions that are required to reduce preventable deaths, including the deaths of people with disability in residential care that are associated with:

- choking on food
- fractures, and
- the delayed diagnosis of life-threatening conditions.

‘It is vital that people with disability get the support they need to minimise their health risks, access health services, and receive necessary treatment,’ said the Ombudsman. **‘Our reviews have shown that this does not always occur, and the impact on individuals is significant.’**

The Ombudsman’s reviews of deaths over the past 12 years have consistently identified problems in mainstream health services that adversely affect the health outcomes of people with disability. Against this background, the report includes a focus on the urgent work that is needed in NSW to meet the health needs of people with disability in the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

‘Our reviews have highlighted the considerable health risks that exist for people with disability if mainstream health services are not ready at the point of transition to the NDIS and the associated withdrawal of NSW Government-funded specialist disability supports,’ the Ombudsman said.

‘There is substantial work that is required before the full roll out of the NDIS on 1 July 2018. However, the NDIS launch sites also provide a great opportunity for NSW to make crucial changes to improve health supports for people with disability and to lead the way for other states and territories.’

The Ombudsman has made 10 recommendations, directed to Health, the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and National Disability Services (NDS).