

Media release

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PUBLIC ADVOCATE WELCOMES PALASZCZUK GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE DISABILITY ADVOCACY FUNDING

The Public Advocate, Ms Mary Burgess, welcomed the announcement late today by the Honourable Craig Crawford, Minister for Seniors, Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships that the government will extend its funding of disability advocacy services in Queensland for the next two years.

“While this is a positive development, there remains a level of uncertainty about the amount of funding being provided, the length of the funding, and which services will qualify for it,” Ms Burgess said.

“The funding the government has announced today is \$0.55M per year less than current funding for disability advocacy services, which are already overwhelmed by demand. It’s unclear why the funding has been reduced.

“The government has only committed to funding these essential services for another two years until Queensland has ‘transitioned to full scheme National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)’. This suggests that the NDIS will continue to fund these services after this time. We have no confirmation of this from the Commonwealth Government,” Ms Burgess said.

“I look forward to the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments negotiating a National Disability Strategy that guarantees ongoing disability advocacy funding for Queenslanders into the future, separate from the NDIS,” Ms Burgess said.

“Queenslanders with disability are going to need to access disability advocacy to help them engage with State government departments, and other agencies, well into the future. The NDIS will not fund disability advocacy for these purposes. We need to know that the Queensland Government recognises and commits to funding this critical and ongoing need for advocacy services by Queenslanders with disability.

“It is also unclear whether the processes for allocating funding to disability advocacy services is changing. It would be concerning if different criteria for funding disability advocacy services were to be introduced without the Queensland Government releasing its finalised Disability Advocacy Strategy,” said Ms Burgess.

The ‘Stand with Us!’ public rallies are going ahead tomorrow, even though disability advocacy agencies and peaks and their supporters, acknowledge and appreciate the Palaszczuk Government’s funding announcement today.

It is important that people demonstrate to the government how much they value and need disability advocacy services and want the government to commit to their funding on a long-term basis.

ENDS

Note 1: The Public Advocate undertakes systemic advocacy to advance and protect the rights and interests of Queenslanders with impaired decision-making capacity. People can experience impaired capacity from a range of conditions, including mental illness, intellectual disability, acquired brain injury, neurological conditions, and aged-related conditions such as dementia.

Note 2: Information about the ‘Stand with us’ campaign and public rallies can be accessed at <https://www.standwithus.com.au/>.