**BCA Inform: September, NDIS and DRC Update**

On Tuesday, September 3rd, BCA Inform explored the latest developments in the ongoing reforms to the disability policy landscape. The session focused on the novel insertion of Section 10 to the NDIS Act, the findings from the Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce, and the government's response to the Disability Royal Commission (DRC).

Jackson Reynolds-Ryan, BCA’s Senior Policy Officer, began by outlining the recent passage of the NDIS Amendment Bill and explaining its legislative journey. A key change was in the eligibility criteria, shifting the assessment from individual support items to a whole-of-person approach.

While this was seen as a positive step, it raised concerns about how needs would be determined and about the qualifications of assessors. It was noted that additional assessments may be required for new plans, but that the government, rather than participants, should bear the cost.

With changes to several areas, including eligibility criteria, Jackson noted that BCA will work on consolidating all significant information into one centralised location, which will be made available on BCA’s website.

The session then shifted to a discussion about whether a Disability Rights Act or a Human Rights Act with a disability component would be preferable. Most agreed that a Disability Rights Act would be the better option, as it would ensure that critical aspects specific to the disability community are not diluted.

Jackson highlighted the Australian government's commitment to updating the National Disability Strategy by the end of the year, with an evaluation planned for next year. This strategy will focus on seven priority areas, including broadening eligibility for the new disability employment services program and developing resources for disability employment staff.

Jackson emphasised the importance of co-design in ensuring that reforms within the NDIS, particularly through the Disability Royal Commission, are effective and sustainable.

The session then examined the introduction of Section 10, which defines "reasonable and necessary" supports that would be funded. Jackson expressed concerns about the exclusion of commonly used and needed appliances from the list. He emphasised the need to distinguish between high-tech appliances that may be considered luxury items for the average person but are essential for individuals who are blind or vision impaired.

An update was also provided on the recommendation for mandatory registration of all providers and workers, initially proposed by the NDIS Independent Review. A specialised task force has been established to investigate this, and their report is still pending.

Additionally, Jackson discussed the development of foundational supports to reduce pressure on the NDIS. A consultation on the implementation and funding of these supports is now open, with the Commonwealth and States allocating $11.6 million over two years.

The session concluded with an acknowledgment of the growing need for advocacy, information sharing, capacity building, and peer support amid the rapidly evolving disability policy landscape.