



Disability Workforce Statement

31 March 2020

The disability sector unions, Australian Services Union (ASU), Health Services Union (HSU) and United Workers Union (UWU) today call on the Federal Government to act immediately to ensure the ongoing safety of people with a disability and the disability workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the principal funder of disability services, the Federal Government has the responsibility to ensure services continue in a safe way for both people with a disability and the workers who support them. The Federal Government must take action now to ensure that people with disability are able to safely access services

The disability workforce across Australia are amongst those on the front line of this crisis, continuing to provide support and assistance to people with disability. Disability support workers already feel overworked and understaffed. There are also high levels of insecure, casual work in the disability sector. They must be better supported in doing their job and facing this COVID crisis – to ensure their safety and the safety of the people they support.

The Government must urgently:

- **provide funding to ensure all workers in the disability sector, regardless of employment status, do not go without pay when their ability to provide a service is disrupted due to COVID-19.**
- **provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and additional cleaning services to keep workers and people with disability safe.**
- **provide ongoing infection control training.**
- **deliver wage increases to ensure workers are supported to continue delivering high-quality and safe services to people with a disability**
- **work with the disability unions and the broader sector to prepare for a surge in workforce need so that new workers are appropriately trained, supported and safe.**

These measures need to apply to all people with disability and the workers who support them – not just those in funded via the NDIS.

If we are going to beat this crisis, we need action now.