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Media Release

NDIS needs more funds or it risks being a half-baked scheme, says MDA boss

"I am not surprised that the NDIS has already blown out by 30 per cent in its first four months of operation as we told anyone that would listen and even advised the Senate Committee that more funds are needed. Otherwise, it risks turning into a half-baked scheme with good intentions on the surface but ultimately not give the help needed to some of the most vulnerable members of our society," said Muscular Dystrophy Australia's Executive Director, Boris Struk.

"At this stage the predicted cost for individual plans has averaged more than $10,000 over budget going from an estimated $34,969 to $46,290. Personally, I believe this figure will just increase because the cost of care and equipment for people with a disability is enormous and some families are getting into significant debt just to keep up with the bills," said Mr Struk.

"The wheelchair for my son Ryan, who is 34-years-old and has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, cost $26,000 and that may be considered conservative compared to other specialty wheelchairs," said Mr Struk.

"Politicians and policy makers need to wake up and realise the extraordinary cost associated with providing adequate care, as well as necessary equipment and devices, for a person living with a disability," said Mr Struk.

MDA recently published a vital new report 'Economic Study of Muscular Dystrophy' produced by *Deloitte Access* which was launched by the Assistant Minister for Social Services, Senator The Hon. Mitch Fifield.

"After personally discussing the economic impact of MD with Senator Fifield at the launch of the report, I am confident he has an understanding of the enormity of associated costs for families with members who have a disability. What we need now is the Government to recognise this and reevaluate the allocated funds for the NDIS so the proper care and support can be provided for these people within our community," said Mr Struk.

The 'Economic Study of Muscular Dystrophy' revealed that in 2007 it was estimated that the total economic cost to Australian society associated with MD was around $1.4 billion in 2005, this figure was updated to reflect today's economy and was estimated to be more than $1.8 billion in 2012.

"This cost of close to $2 billion which MD places on the Australian economy is just a window into the extent of how significant these financial strains are to both society as a whole and on a personal level to families. We would like to see the budget allocation for the NDIS reviewed and amended to reflect a more realistic outlook for what kind of financial support is needed to help those living with disabilities," said Mr Struk.

"We place so much emphasis on other areas of our economy such as defence, tourism and sporting events, how about we try to focus a bit more attention and funding on providing people with basic human rights such as the ability to walk or get an education," said Mr Struk.

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To obtain a copy of the 'Economic Study of MD' report or to arrange an interview with Muscular Dystrophy Australia Executive Director, Boris M Struk, please contact:

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