Media Release

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Inclusive Rainbow Voices' National LGBTIQA+ Disability Network and Inclusive Rainbow Voices call for the proposed reforms to the NDIS to be scrapped, and express their frustration at the ableist rhetoric surrounding their announcement.

The "original intent" of the NDIS has always been to realise the human rights of people with disability, as part of Australia's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Aligned with Australia's Disability Strategy, it was designed to enable the inclusion of people with disability across all spheres of life: in workplaces, in education, in families, in our communities. It's right there in the Objects and Charter of the NDIS Act.

For LGBTIQA+ people with disability, the promise and potential of the NDIS has been that we might finally be able to be recognised as full members of our communities, accessing the support, recognition and relationships the rest of Australia takes for granted. Inclusion has remained out of reach for many for too long, thanks to inaccessibility in mainstream and LGBTIQA+ communities and services, thin markets when it comes to queer-friendly disability supports, and a history of treating our human rights to access our sexuality and gender marginalised communities as frivolous or excessive.

The proposed reforms will severely impact LGBTIQA+ people with disability. The realisation of our human rights to quality healthcare, social participation, capacity building, and our right to live safe, accessible, and valued lives, already tenuous, will be further undermined. These cuts risk forcing us back into the closet, depriving us of the very communities the NDIS wants us to rely on for 'informal supports'.

The discourse wheeled out to justify these cuts has been egregious. Leaning into eugenicist characterisation of people with disability as drains on society rather than as full and valued members of the Australian community does direct and immediate harm to people with disability, exacerbating our exclusion across the community.

"We are deeply concerned about our communities," said Dr Jess Cadwallader, IRV CEO. "We already face higher rates of discrimination, violence and abuse, and suicidality, and we worry about the impact of both the cuts and the surrounding discourse on LGBTIQA+ people with disability."

Our human rights are being treated not only as optional, but as a net drain on the balance sheet of the nation. This is exclusion and segregation dressed up as fiscal responsibility. We call for the scrapping of these reforms, and for any future changes to

centre the realization of the human rights of people with disability, including LGBTIQA+ people with disability, in line with Australia's international commitments.

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