

2 December 2019

## **BRINGING THE NDIS TO REGIONAL AUSTRALIA**

Social Futures is bringing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) directly to people living in rural and remote communities thanks to mobile offices rolling out across Western and Northern NSW.

Mobile Office Outreach Vans, affectionately known as MOOVs, are purpose-fitted to provide a wheelchair accessible office space. The comfortable, air conditioned spaces with Wi-Fi hotspots allow participants and carers to sit and discuss their NDIS plans and get information about supports available in their community.

Social Futures Executive Manager of Disability and Inclusion, David Thomson, said the MOOVs are an Australian first for the NDIS Local Area Coordination Program which helps NDIS participants access the support and services they need.

“For people living in small, rural communities, accessing services can be a challenge and if you have a disability or limited transport options it can seem like mission impossible,” Mr Thomson said.

“We know that people prefer meeting with us face to face and the MOOVs allow us to meet them where they live. We think this is very important because the NDIS is all about providing choice, dignity and inclusion for Australians living with disability.

“While we already regularly visit areas outside of our main service centres, the MOOVs allow us to provide a comprehensive services to residents of smaller townships and remote communities, including Aboriginal communities which may not have buildings or offices available to operate from.

“The MOOVs also enable us to be flexible and responsive to community needs and even provide post-disaster recovery services in the event existing services are disrupted such as the current ongoing bushfire crisis,” he said.

As well as delivering a travelling meeting space for our existing NDIS participants, the MOOVs will provide information and advice at community events across our service footprint.

Social Futures is an NDIS partner, providing Local Area Coordination services throughout regional New South Wales. For more information visit [socialfutures.org.au](http://socialfutures.org.au) or call 1800 522 679.

**ENDS**

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**Interviews:** David Thomson, Executive Manager Disability and Inclusion

**Photo credit:** Social Futures

Photo 1 – Social Futures NDIS Local Area Coordinators and Reconciliation and Engagement Officer visit Tabulam Public School with a new MOOV.

Photo 2 – Social Futures Local Area Coordinator Aly Redfern chats with NDIS participant Zane Gray near his inaccessible rural property in Northern New South Wales in a new MOOV. The van features a hydraulic mobility lift to enable access for participants.

**Note to editors:**

1. Social Futures is a community service organisation based in Northern NSW. We have more than 40 years' experience as a regional leader, advocating with the communities we work in; working in partnership with others; and providing services that promote inclusion, fairness and social justice. Our work encompasses homelessness and housing supports, youth and family services, programs that promote genuine participation for people with disability, community sector support, professional development, and systemic advocacy.
2. We are leading the charge to make the NDIS more accessible for people living in rural communities. Our Local Area Coordinators have partnered with healthcare workers (including Early Childhood Early Intervention, paediatrician, psychologist, local hospital and medical services), local schools and other services to provide a coordinated outreach program to rural Aboriginal communities in the Northern NSW townships of Tabulam and Bonalbo.