

AM

WITH TONY EASTLEY

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The full story...

NDIS 'launch' sites now 'trial' sites

Samantha Donovan reported this story on [Saturday, December 14, 2013](#) 08:12:00

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SIMON SANTOW: Supporters of the National Disability Insurance Scheme say the Abbott Government would be foolish to delay the scheme's roll-out.

The Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, stressed his support for the NDIS yesterday, but he surprised many of the scheme's backers when he pointed out the 'launch sites' are now being called 'trial sites.'

From Canberra, Samantha Donovan reports.

SAMANTHA DONOVAN: The National Disability Insurance Scheme championed by Julia Gillard has long had the Coalition's support.

On coming to office though, it made its mark by changing the name back to the NDIS from DisabilityCare.

And after yesterday's COAG (Council of Australian Governments) meeting, the Prime Minister Tony Abbott dropped the news there's been another name change.

TONY ABBOTT: You'll notice that the language has changed; we're describing these as trial sites rather than launch sites, because we will learn from what's happening in these sites and we will incorporate the learnings from these sites into the design of the final scheme.

SAMANTHA DONOVAN: John Della Bosca is the director of the Every Australian Counts campaign, which lobbied for the establishment of the NDIS.

He was surprised the launch sites are now trial sites.

JOHN DELLA BOSCA: I don't think names and nomenclature matter that much; what's important is that I don't think any government can now walk away from the important commitment to the National

Disability Insurance Scheme.

SAMANTHA DONOVAN: But the change in terminology though seems to suggest that if the trial doesn't work out, there won't be a launch.

JOHN DELLA BOSCA: Well some people I think will read tea leaves and come up with that conclusion. I think it's probably more likely that there's a simple political conclusion to be taken that the Government wants to invest in different terminology to the previous government's usage.

SAMANTHA DONOVAN: Mr Abbott stressed yesterday that he's absolutely committed to the NDIS, but he says that demand and costs are proving higher than anticipated. Are you seeing that as well?

JOHN DELLA BOSCA: Well it's very early days to start making predictions about cost and about the benefits of the scheme, because clearly comes of the initial costs are upfront costs, and that was always something that governments - the previous government and this Government - went into eyes wide open.

It's important to understand that the cost-benefits of the system, the cost-benefits of an NDIS, will take time but they are huge. They've been tested over and over again by very reputable economic modellers.

SAMANTHA DONOVAN: Are you at all concerned that the Government's support for the NDIS may be dropping away?

JOHN DELLA BOSCA: I think any government, including the Abbott Government, that started to back away from the undertakings made on a bipartisan basis would be very foolish indeed politically, apart from the ethics of breaking a promise, and the ethics of letting down hundreds of thousands of Australians with a disability who really haven't had a fair go up until now and are expecting the NDIS to deliver one.

SAMANTHA DONOVAN: Disability ministers are due to report to COAG on the progress of the NDIS trials in Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales in March.

SIMON SANTOW: Samantha Donovan.



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