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March 2 2020 - 3:30PM

'Crisis level': Dozens of NDIS clients left without representation



[Dan Jervis-Bardy](#)

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A key service for NDIS clients had reached a "crisis level" before a recent government funding injection, with staff shortages leaving dozens of people without support, an ACT Legislative Assembly inquiry has heard.

The Barr government's mid-year budget review, [handed down last month](#), included funding for two additional full-time employees at the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian.

The staff will be based in the office's guardianship unit, where they will work with clients who are supported by the National Disability Insurance Scheme. A total of \$128,000 has been set aside for the remainder of this financial year, with a sum of \$919,000 budgeted for the next four years.

Appearing before a parliamentary inquiry into the mid-year budget on Monday morning, ACT Public Trustee and Guardian Andrew Taylor revealed just how vital the extra resourcing would be.

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Mr Taylor said staff shortages meant that at one points there were up to 35 clients who were "un-allocated", meaning they weren't receiving support. The guardianship office helps NDIS clients develop service agreements with providers, as well as with writing and reviewing their care plans.

"Prior to the allocation of this, the representation of persons under order of guardianship was at crisis level," Mr Taylor told the hearing.

"We effectively had a significant shortcoming in terms of the number of staff that were available to current clients."

Mr Taylor said the resourcing pressures weren't isolated to the ACT, with similar organisations in other states and territories also grappling with a "significant increase in responsibility" since the roll out of the NDIS.

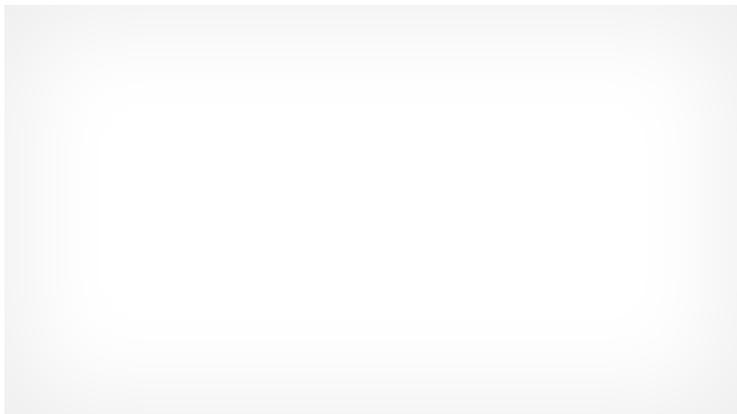
He said before the mid-year budget allocation, money was being taken from the public trustee's budget to prop up the guardianship services.

"That was not appropriate," he said.



 A support service for NDIS clients was in crisis before a recent funding injection from the ACT government.

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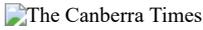
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