



# Statement

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## **SENATOR JAN MCLUCAS** **Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers**

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23 February 2011

Sorry I couldn't be with you on this wonderful occasion to celebrate this special milestone for the National Ethnic Disability Alliance, but I thank you for giving me the chance to provide this message to you.

Congratulations on 15 years of protecting the rights and interests of people from non-English speaking backgrounds with disability, their families and carers.

Countless Australians owe a debt of gratitude to the National Ethnic Disability Alliance.

And I want to say how much the Australian Government appreciates your work.

While the Government has a major role in the disability sector, we could never replace the dedicated people of the community sector.

Organisations, such as yours, passionately represent their members, and inform us of the issues affecting their lives.

And in the National Ethnic Disability Alliance's case, you are the national voice for the unique problems that face people with disability from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Your advice helps the Government drive forward our disability reform agenda.

This Government is about listening to the community and taking action.

We have been working to improve the lives of people with disability, promote participation, remove discrimination and create a more inclusive society.

While a great deal has been done in disability policy over the past three years, there are still many more challenges ahead.

It is a busy time in the disability portfolio, and the Alliance has been an active participant.

You have contributed to the development of the National Disability Strategy, which will drive improvements in areas such as the protection of rights, learning and skills, health and wellbeing and economic security.

You have also assisted the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into a long-term care and support scheme, including consulting with your members to inform your submission.

And I understand you are now preparing a policy paper on people from non English speaking backgrounds with disability and electoral issues.

I would like to thank you for your extensive work in these areas.

Again, I would like to congratulate you on reaching this milestone and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Thank you.

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