



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Ai-Media Says NDIS Vital for Economic Health of the Nation**

2 February 2012

Ai-Media has welcomed Opposition Leader Tony Abbott's unequivocal commitment this week to implement a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), as proposed by the Productivity Commission.

"We now have crystal clear declarations from both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, making profound disability reform a top priority for the nation, which is a great step forward," said Ai-Media CEO, Tony Abrahams.

"But I know that many people with disability, their carers, and service providers remain concerned about the timetable for action, and a guarantee on how the scheme will be funded."

Mr Abbott, at this stage, made his party's support for implementation of a full NDIS conditional on the Federal Budget returning to surplus.

Mr Abrahams said: "We urge the Parliament to reconsider the economic case for urgent reform according to the timeline proposed by the Productivity Commission.

"The Commission made it clear that the economic cost of the NDIS is dwarfed by the continuing cost of inaction, due to the large and growing number of Australians on disability support pensions and many more providing unpaid care outside of the mainstream economy.

"The NDIS will contribute positively to the budget bottom line if just a fraction of the 800,000 people on the disability support pension find work through the supports and technologies it will fund and deliver. The NDIS will also strengthen Australia's social fabric."

Mr Abrahams cited his company's development of the Ai-Live™ real-time captioning service as an example of a service that clearly assists people with disability become more productive. The NDIS could help drive development of more services like Ai-Live™ by Australian industry.

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“In our first Ai-Live™ pilot in a mainstream school in Western Sydney, one deaf student went from the bottom of her class to coming first in the yearly exam, in just ten weeks. With the prospect of this service being available at university and in the workplace, this young woman is now well-placed to get a good job and become a significant economic contributor,” Mr Abrahams said.

“Every year of delay means more people with a disability will miss out on the education and skills they need to equip them for the modern economy. The sooner the NDIS is implemented, the fewer people will fall unnecessarily between the cracks, and the sooner the budget impact will be positive.”

**Further information:** Tony Abrahams – 0405 369 652

### **About Ai-Media:**

Ai-Media is a social enterprise founded in 2003 and dedicated to ending the experience of social, educational and vocational exclusion that people with disability face.

Ai-Media provides television captioning services.

In 2010, Ai-Media launched Ai-Live, a breakthrough broadband-based captioning service that enables deaf and hearing impaired students to participate easily in mainstream classrooms. Ai-Live is now available in the workplace and tertiary education institutions to assist people with disabilities to learn and communicate.

Ai-Media has received support from Commercialisation Australia in the development of Ai-Live.

More information: [www.ai-media.tv](http://www.ai-media.tv)