

## NDIA chief resigns suddenly

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The Coalition's point man at the top of the National Disability Insurance Agency has resigned suddenly, effective immediately, less than two years after taking the job.

Former Bankwest managing director Rob De Luca was poached by Christian Porter, then social services minister, to become chief executive of the NDIA, the organisation responsible for delivering the \$22 billion National Disability Insurance Scheme. Mr De Luca will leave immediately to take up a job as CEO of Zenitas Healthcare and his replacement will need to be signed off by the next federal government because of his sudden departure in the middle of the election campaign with caretaker provisions in place.

Zenitas Healthcare lists the NDIS as its second-largest revenue source, accounting for 20 per cent of its forecast income streams in the current financial year.

To avoid any perceived conflict of interest, it was the view of the NDIA board and Social Services Minister Paul Fletcher that Mr De Luca step down immediately.

*The Australian* understands there were no issues with his performance or the working relationship of Mr De Luca, the board or the government.

The next government will have the opportunity to further shape the culture at the massive government agency.

Mr De Luca was in the disability role for 18 months but in that time he has filled out the top ranks of the agency with former colleagues and peers from the banking and insurance sector.

In an email to staff shortly after 7pm yesterday, the NDIA board told staff: "It is with regret that we have accepted Mr De Luca's resignation. Rob has been an inspiring leader who has attracted and built a highly capable executive team which has underpinned a tripling of the number of participants as the scheme rolled out."

*The Australian* revealed in May last year that Mr De Luca had hired the bank's former head of strategy, Anthony Vella, and installed him as deputy chief executive in charge of strategy and risk. Two other former employees of the then Bankwest boss — David Sharpham and Karun Gupta — were appointed as senior general managers in Mr Vella's team.

Another Bankwest general manager, Antonia Albanese, has taken up a role in charge of market and provider development at the agency, reporting directly to Mr De Luca.

Mr De Luca took over the scheme's management less than a year after it began its "ambitious" transition to full rollout and has overseen the tripling of participant numbers in that time.

In an email to staff last night, Mr De Luca said he was "so glad" he made the decision to join the agency. "I took on the role ... to play my part in improving the independence, economic and social outcomes for people with disabilities," he said.

He has, however, weathered scandals, including a botched move to pare back automatic entry rights for people with mid-level autism that was posted on the agency's website after a deputy CEO failed to read a briefing note properly and signed off on changes he said he never saw.

Mr Fletcher last night thanked Mr De Luca for his time in the job.