



6th October 2022

SUBMISSION

Introduction

A not-for-profit organisation, the Onemda Association (Onemda), is a centre for learning and therapeutic development for adults with intellectual disabilities. Established in 1969, Onemda is a registered NDIS provider operating several campuses across Melbourne, providing a wide range of individually tailored group activities on campus and in various community settings. The curriculum focuses on individual needs and interests, developing skills and enhancing life opportunities.

The organisation provides group services, therapy services and support coordination. In addition, Onemda has established a Research & Innovation Centre, which has numerous partnerships with universities, research entities and innovation organisations across Australia. The fundamental purpose of the Centre is to strive for world-class learning and life outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities through practice, influence and leadership.

Submission objective

Through its extensive history in supporting people with a disability and their carer network, Onemda wishes to provide objective insights into the Inquiry into the Capability and Culture of the NDIA. These insights are based on actual experiences, customer feedback, and broader knowledge of the community care industry in Australia and globally.

Key issues and suggested redress recommendations

Key Issue	Recommendation to rectify
Irregularities with worker screening obligations between registered and non-registered service providers	Introducing a universal national worker screening licence for any person providing any paid disability care and support which is funded through the NDIS or other government sources
Inconsistent market-based system of NDIS providers lacking accountability with regulatory protections.	Legislate for all disability service providers to be registered and compliant with minimum national service and safety standards relevant to their size, scale, scope, and expertise. This includes greater transparency and compliance with incident reporting and complaints management.
NDIA cannot track NDIS expenditure at a service level for unregistered providers. Similarly, the NDIS Commission has no information on unregistered service providers until a complaint or an incident report is lodged.	Increase the capacity of the NDIS Commission to process the increasing number of provider registration applications and evaluate and ensure provider compliance with its Code of Conduct. Increase the powers and capacity of both the NDIA and the NDIS Commission to better track, monitor and prosecute Plan mismanagement and fraud.

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Key Issue	Recommendation to rectify
There is a general lack of interest or understanding of provider insight and what little focus there is, is dominated by the large SIL provider market. The narrative of innovation, responsiveness and participant choice is not being told.	<p>Appoint a specialist provider relations team along the lines of Health Insurance funds to support a balanced approach to provider management, provider relations based on partnership and establishment of contractually based preferred provider network and management of the funding model.</p> <p>The focus of the provider relations team will be equally shared with the SME and large provider market to enable holistic and balanced feedback and information loop to the NDIA.</p>
Lack of sector understanding, participant and carer needs from agency staff across all levels.	Recruiting staff from the insurance, health, community services and disability sectors and appointing across all levels, including senior leadership roles.
Overly complex system to navigate and administer, which stifles choice, control, and innovation	<p>Stop pricing being governed by staff rosters and 24-hour clock. Pricing needs to be based on aggregated use and support, allowing greater freedom and choice for participants.</p> <p>The NDIA would benefit from commencing the process of de-regulation to enable the scheme to fulfil its original objective of real choice, control, and service innovation.</p>

In Summary

Onemda is fully supportive of the NDIS and is committed to ensuring its long-term sustainability and impact on people living with a disability. We hope our insights and recommendations benefit the Inquiry into the Capability and Culture of the NDIA so we all can experience an improved and collegial NDIS in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Lewis

Chief Executive Officer