

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Committee and Inquiry. My submission is grounded on my first hand experience helping a family member who is a NDIS participant. In order to better address their need and to progress their NDIS goals, my family member has been agency managed, plan managed and self managed since joining the NDIS.

The benefits the NDIS has started delivering are well documented and I believe there is a long runway ahead of benefits to

- 1) participants
- 2) their families
- 3) their communities
- 4) local businesses
- 5) local economies
- 6) our health system and
- 7) our national economy,

from a well functioning NDIS even beyond our current understanding given the principles it has been founded on and its transformational nature.

The challenge though is that the consequences of getting it wrong are far more immediate and significant for participants and their families and this is important to recognise given these are our most vulnerable people being put at further risk.

Participants and their families have high opportunity cost on their time already and the portal, ICT system design, implementation and operation needs to facilitate maximum time being spent getting on with implementing plans (ie find, book and get supports in the preferred way) in order to achieve NDIS goals and minimal time dealing with portal, technology or administrative pain and or burden. All of these should be in the background and just work. This sensitivity is important in enabling the NDIS vision, mission and principles and mitigate the downside for this vulnerable cohort.

Key Portal and ICT infrastructure related challenges and support examples

- 1) Lacking flexibility and configurability for participants
 - a. Portal and ICT infrastructure appears to be designed and built on a social security architecture rather than consumer directed care model
 - i. Complex to access for participant and their families.
 - ii. Look and feel very similar to MyGov interface which isn't configured to deal with the wide spectrum of physical, psychological or cognitive capacity and transactional and variable nature of the NDIS related activity.
 - iii. Arbitrary limitations on what the information can be accessed from the portal. For example only current plan budget are visible even though old plans remain active for 60 days post end date.
 - iv. Inability to change plan administration method via portal. For example moving from Agency managed to plan

managed to be able to have a non-NDIS registered provider deliver say domestic cleaning. Requires a lengthy process through the NDIA call centre or local branches.

- v. Unable to perform basic functions consumers today expect from web based interfaces eg configurable dashboards, search functionality for plans, claim history, integration of document storage with the NDIA systems.
- vi. Portal and ICT infrastructure appear to be built on the assumptions that
 1. plans will be right first time
 2. delivery of supports remains consistent over the plan period eg if someone has a \$12k plan covering a 12 month period that they will be spending it at the rate of \$1k per month
 3. participants won't be needing to change their mode of plan administration within a plan period or outside a plan review.

Our experience proved these assumptions are flawed.

- 2) Lacking real-time data and analytics to help participants track their plan during implementation. Participants need better and more accessible information and tools to help them exercise choice and control.
 - i. Participants and even NDIA staff have poor visibility on where a actual plan/budget utilization is at because data is only captured when received by the Portal and there can be significant lags between service delivery and when data is entered into the portal. The consequence is that the view of plan utilization at a given point in time can be quite distorted and the process to reconcile is manual, time consuming and requires financial literacy.
 - ii. There are no budgeting or analytical tools to help participants manage their budgets over the course of the plan period and identify flow on affects of changes in circumstances/needs which may have resulted in over/underspend during the plan period.
- 3) Lacking integration with decision making and operation of the Scheme
 - i. Certain functionality within the Portal seems to live in isolation and without integration even though there is strong logic for it to be integrated. For example the document storage functionality in the portal should enable fast, efficient document sharing between participant and the NDIA office but time after time participants are requested to provide sensitive documents to their local NDIA office by less secure local branch email addresses.
 - ii. Email communication protocols aren't fit for purpose. Emails received from the NDIA have security protocols which most participants and families have no awareness off, find hard to engage with and frankly don't make sense.

For example every email communication comes via a link from the Department of Human Services (DHS) and not the NDIA, requires participant to create profile and a login with the DSS and requires the participant to reply within that environment rather than using the environment from which they generated the original email eg google mail. Further the messages received from the NDIA vanish after a rolling period of a few months and vital communications are lost forever.

I look forward to the outcomes of the Committee's deliberations.