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Joint Standing Committee on NDIS

NDIS ICT Systems

Submission from Cara

Registered NDIS Provider No. 4050000859

Report on ICT Infrastructure in particular reference to:
a. participant and provider experiences of the MyPlace Portal
b. the impact of the role of other Government agencies on the ICT infrastructure;
c. the appropriateness of the MyPlace Portal and National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) facing IT systems;
d. the impact of ICT infrastructure on the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS); and
e. any other related matters

Responses:

- **The MyPlace portal is currently being used for the purposes of financial transactions only.** No information sharing to and from customers is occurring due to the shortcomings of the portal design. The intention appears to be for customers and providers to communicate through the portal, but this has not been realised. The potential of participant led information sharing and communication will not be realised within the MyPlace Portal until participants or nominees have greater capability to share information through the portal. Participants are required to share a range of information outside of the portal due to current design limitations. Features such as "Referrals" and "Messages" have structural errors. For example, the "Message" feature does not confirm to whom messages are being conveyed, and likewise the search feature does not return any results to confirm the identity of the participant. This has created an increased risk of privacy breach if/when using the messaging feature as there is no confirmation of participant identity for the provider before sending a message.

- **The design of the MyPlace portal appears based on a very transactional approach to service provision**. For customers with complex and multiple disability seeking a simple exchange of information with providers, the structure of breaking down supports under a 'Service Booking' approach has added complexity and duplication. We have not yet experienced one customer/participant who has created their own Service Booking within MyPlace Portal, and the majority of our customers/participants do not access the MyPlace Portal without support from nominees.

- **Duplication has been created due to not being able to export information.** MyPlace Portal does not allow for data to be exported to financial or customer management systems. Data-entry requirements have increased for providers who are required to manage information within the MyPlace Portal and within financial and customer management systems.

- **There is inconsistent data between participant and provider views.** If/when participants query information in MyPlace Portal with the provider, the data that providers view does not align to the data participants view. Providers are often unable to assist participants' enquiries, and are being directed back to the NDIA to confirm details. This could be vastly improved by joint ICT design with participants and providers.

- **There is no notification of changes to existing Service Bookings.** The service booking end dates and funds are sometimes reduced without notification to provider and we don't find out until we go in and check. It would be helpful to know if a Service Booking has been updated (by NDIA or participant) through an automated notification system. Currently, if changes are made without notification, it affects the cash flow of a provider and consequently may put at risk the provider's viability.

- **Difficulties creating Service Booking -** Since the recent update to the MyPlace Portal we need to enter a participant's NDIS number, Surname and Date of Birth to create a new Service Booking. Customers with old NDIS plans have NDIS numbers with prefix 363 XXX XXX, however providers now can only enter NDIS numbers with a prefix starting with 430 XXX XXX. The 430 numbers do not come in place until the new plan is effective. It would be preferable to have some way of searching for the customer before they are allocated their number prefixed by 430. At present the provider has to continue to email and phone the customer for this information, which can be disruptive and annoying for the customer. A renewed process would assist both the customer and provider.

- **No option to cancel a Payment Request once submitted.** When a payment request is made, it takes 24 – 48 hours to process payment for the submitted request. In cases where a provider may need to cancel the payment request, the NDIS guide indicates a button for 'Cancel payment request' before the money gets paid to provider. However, in the MyPlace Portal, no such button exists. When the NDIS team has been contacted via phone, the response is negative. It would be helpful to allow providers to cancel a payment request if an administrative or entry error is made, rather than the more difficult process of correcting an error after payment has been made.

- **Ticketed support from NDIS call centre needed.** Contact is being made with the NDIA team when experiencing problems with Service Bookings or payments that can potentially be corrected. However, following assurance that the request will be attended to and we will receive a call or email from a different department, the request is not attended to and neither is any call or email received back from the NDIA. There is a perception that NDIA staff do not have enough knowledge to assist providers with queries regarding financial administration of plans to avoid inappropriate claims for funding, and the lack of a clear tracking system for enquiries is reinforcing this perception. A ticketing system with reference number for queries would allow for greater transparency and resolution of issues.

- **Interaction and data transfer with NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission Portal is unclear.** The recently created Commission Portal appears to have been developed with information taken from the MyPlace Portal in regards to provider information. However, the two portals perform very different functions, and the transfer of data from MyPlace to Commission portal has created a large amount of data that needs to be corrected. For example, User data from MyPlace has formed the default User group of the Commission Portal. As the MyPlace portal is primarily being used for financial transactions, the users of the MyPlace Portal include a range of finance officers and service delivery staff for whom access to the Commission portal is not required, or in some cases, not appropriate.

Summary

Many providers have offered to be part of a co-design for improved ICT systems that allow for greater participant choice and control. The current system and infrastructure has created additional administrative burden. Feedback from customers/participants and their nominees is that the ICT infrastructure has created added complexity and confusion, and especially for people with complex and multiple disability, has not made any improvements in choice and control. As an organisation, we would be willing to work in a co-design model that would improve the NDIS ICT infrastructure for participants and providers.

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