

Hi,

I am an Occupational Therapist working in the West Gippsland area of Victoria. I have worked as an OT for 32 years. I work with families who have young children with a disability or developmental delay.

I am expressing my concerns about the proposed Changes to the NDIS Bill, specifically Schedule 2.

My concerns are as outlined -

s45A - Payment Claims and information requests -

The suggested changes may lead to disruption of services, and this will affect the safety and outcomes of the NDIS participants, their family and other services the child attends.

S47A - Plan variations and funding changes

This change may lead to people having funding reduced without any justification. Surely funding needs should be discussed with the person and their significant others to establish what is needed for that person. Each person has individual needs, and this should be explored and addressed for that unique person and situation.

I am very concerned that people will not get the services that they need.

I have witnessed parents experience extreme distress having to advocate for their child to get the services that they need to help their child and family to function and develop.

These parents are already under extreme distress due to the nature of living with a child with a disability. The NDIS should be there to provide support, not add to their stress.

I am also concerned about the changes to the assessment process beginning this year.

I am concerned that the Support Needs Assessment using staff within the NDIS will not provide a thorough assessment for the person, and therefore the person will not get what they need. In my professional opinion, it is not enough time to provide an extensive assessment through meeting the person once, even if it is for a 3-hour assessment.

I am also concerned that having a set tool (I-Can) to use on every person doesn't address the individuality of each person. When I complete a functional assessment, I choose which assessment best addresses the needs of the person.

I am also concerned that the person who is completing the assessment will not be a qualified allied health professional. I went to Uni for 4 years and have completed professional developments and gained a lot of experience to be able to provide comprehensive assessments. This skill can not be taught within a short intensive training block. Just as I wouldn't expect to be able to re-wire a house after being given a short amount of intensive training. I respect that electricians have years of training and experience to be able to competently re-wire a house.

I am also concerned that there will be no robust appeal process to be able to communicate the needs of the person, if the outcomes of the assessment mean that the person is not safe and/or not receiving the required services. With the planned set-up, participants will be sent through a closed loop which doesn't allow for any independent assessments. People have a right to appeal and have this process occur independent to the provider who has a vested interest (NDIA).

I am also concerned that the funding allocation after the I-Can assessment will be generated by algorithms, which will not take into account the person's individual needs and situation. This is not a reliable and safe method to determine what a person needs.

I would like the legislative right for people accessing NDIS services to -

- ☐ Have access to assessment processes and reports that the person chooses.
- ☐ Ensure assessment reports are completed by allied health professionals that know the person

- ☐ Each person is treated as a unique individual with unique circumstances and therefore needs extensive assessments to establish what is needed.
- ☐ Ensure there is a review process that allows people to communicate what they need and to be listened to and respected.
- ☐ Ensure the person and their family and team are contacted to discuss any changes needed to plan, and listened to as to what they need.

Disabled people deserve better. Everyone deserves safety and dignity.

I can be contacted for further information.

Regards,
Catherine Durant



Catherine Durant
Occupational Therapist