

## Submission the NDIS & Assistive Technology

I would like to present an issue that has not been resolved by negotiation with NDIS despite written & phone conversation dialogue. My background is that of a prematurely retired senior hospital specialist due to a significant loss of vision. As the President of Blind citizens Australia within South Australia (Adelaide Branch) the experiences of vulnerability listed below are commonly experienced from membership feedback.

I put forward the case that under assistive technology requests that persons with disability often experience vulnerability to access their community should be allowed to purchase a Go Pro. I believe this might be appreciated in terms of natural justice as if often denied to a person who cannot identify a person or situation due to vision, hearing, cognitive, communication or other factors.

Cyclists & vehicles are commonly using them as to incidents, police reporting & legal evidence.

The rationale is that severely vision impaired or blind persons are often denied natural justice as they cannot identify the situation or assailant & hence cannot pass on evidence to the police, council or other authority

Examples from personal experience within the past three years.

- I have been assaulted – last time was last week when a very anti social belligerent man came up to me at Colonnades shopping complex & despite my carer & guide dog he forcefully thumped me, swore aggressively & walked off
- I have been hit by 4 cyclists, at different times on shared pathways, to date who seem to fail to recognize I am not taking a pet dog for a walk & just cycle off without offering any assistance
- I have had so many close encounters with cars at slip lanes especially hybrid cars & thankfully my Guide dog has assisted preventing contact. Despite the Australian road rules stating pedestrian have the right of way it would appear vehicles (at least in South Australia) seldom appreciate this & allow pedestrians the right to cross by stopping.
- I have been bowled over by a skate board user who did not apologize & just took off
- I have been knocked to the ground twice twice by I-Phone zombie behavior – once when crossing North Terrace (Adelaide) on my way to a meeting at the Royal society of the Blind & the perpetrator just walked off leaving me with mt Guide dog on the pedestrian crossing of the roadway & not one person came to my assistance.
- I cannot always identify specific locations of environmental risk – footpaths, foliage, storm water covers etc so as to notify the council
- Both my retired & active working Guide Dogs have been harassed & attacked by off leash dogs on footpath areas. The worst was my now retired Guide dog who had her front neck pieced by teeth in three places. The SAPOL (SA Police) were not interested & the council likewise till I complained to the council CEO.
- SAPOL (Police in SA) in all reported cases under their jurisdiction have not shown interest as I cannot identify the assailant / perpetrator

There have been examples in the press as to the benefits of GO Pro devices by those with vision impairment

## Examples

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/12/victimised-blind-body-worn-cameras-abused>

<https://mashable.com/2017/01/06/blind-man-guide-dog-gopro-camera-discrimination/#4clF.UxWnPqS>

### **In conclusion in reference to the Terms of Reference**

1. There has not been a speedy assessment & resolution despite attempts to enter into dialogue & stating the rationale.
2. There is evidence that such technology assists with investigation from a legal or risk management perspective & hence off sets the problems created that lead to a loss of natural justice.
3. My recommendation is for NDIA to
  - a. Acknowledge requests promptly (within 48 hours or 2 business days)
  - b. Have speedy resolution or enter into dialogue as a KPI
  - c. Appreciate how AT can be utilized to improve access, social inclusion & assist in natural justice experiences.

Dr David Squirrell      Retired Medical Consultant

MB BS Dip Obst RACOG FRACGP FACRRM Grad Dip Disaster Management Grad Dip Musculo Skeletal Medicine Grad Dip Rural Health Dip Business CEMST Dip Theo

- Blind Citizens Australia (Adelaide Branch) President
- BCA National Policy development Committee
- DeafBlind Australia National Board member