

As a disabled Australian citizen and disability advocate, I am deeply concerned about the unintended consequences the NDIS Integrity and Safeguarding Bill 2025 may have for participants.

While the stated intent of the Bill to address misconduct by providers and strengthen safeguards is important, the proposed measures risk disproportionately impacting people with disability rather than those responsible for wrongdoing.

Of particular concern is the potential erosion of participant choice and control. New rules governing plan variations, including the treatment of compensation and other financial considerations, may result in reduced flexibility and increased risk of funding cuts. These changes could undermine the foundational principles of the NDIS by shifting decision-making power away from participants and toward administrative compliance processes. The expanded powers of the Commission also raise serious concerns about overreach. Increased scrutiny and regulatory burden may create a culture of fear and uncertainty for both participants and providers, diverting attention away from the delivery of meaningful supports and toward compliance. Rather than enabling people with disability to pursue their NDIS goals, the system risks becoming more restrictive, complex, and difficult to navigate.

Participants, particularly those in thin markets or with complex and high-support needs, are likely to be disproportionately affected. Additional regulatory barriers may discourage providers from operating in these areas, further limiting access to essential services. For many participants, especially those who self-manage or rely on specialised supports, these changes could make it significantly harder to secure appropriate care or manage their funding effectively.

In strengthening provider accountability, Parliament must ensure that safeguards do not come at the expense of participant autonomy, access, and dignity. Any integrity measures must be carefully balanced to avoid penalising people with disability for systemic failures and to ensure the NDIS remains focused on empowerment, inclusion, and genuine support.