

To whom it may concern,

My name is Francesca Varney, and I am a counsellor and Equine Assisted Therapist. I am deeply concerned about the proposed bill that would exclude Equine/Animal Assisted Therapies from NDIS funding. This type of therapy has a significant positive impact on children and adults, leveraging the therapeutic effects of nature and animals.

I currently work with 20 clients aged 6 to 75, many of whom access funding through the NDIS. These clients often turn to me after traditional talk therapy has failed them. Equine Assisted Therapy helps them develop empathy, compassion, social skills, boundaries, and communication.

The potential removal of funding for Animal Assisted Therapies is distressing. This therapy has proven incredibly effective for my clients, who include children, adolescents and adults dealing with trauma, anxiety, depression, and social challenges.

Before making a decision, I urge you to allocate funding for research into the positive effects of Animal Assisted Therapies. This would prevent a hasty decision that could disadvantage many, particularly those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

I am very happy to contribute time to a potential study to share case studies.

I hope for a positive outcome, both as a therapist and as an advocate for alternative therapies.

Kind regards,

Francesca Varney
The Horse Within