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Dear NDIS Review

Following are two further items for the NDIS Review.

Example of the NDIS creating its surrounding desert

The first of your 5 Key Questions asked, “Why is the NDIS an oasis in a desert?”

In our submission, A4 suggests that the NDIS oasis sits in a desert that the NDIS itself created. Following is what we regard as a clear example of how this happened.

Almost all Autistic children are eligible for Carer Allowance (child). Before the NDIS was created, the *Helping Children with Autism* (HCWA) program provided Autism Advisors. When a child was diagnosed autistic, their family was referred to an Autism Advisor. And one of the first things the HCWA Autism Advisor did was help the family access Carer Allowance (child) payments.

The NDIS abolished HCWA Autism Advisors and anything like them. So now, many families of autistic children are unaware that they are eligible for Carer Allowance (child) or of how to access it.

It appears that a further problem has arisen: increasingly, some Centrelink staff incorrectly deny some autistic children access to Carer Allowance (child).

A (perhaps unintended?) consequence of these changes is that the quality of data describing national autism diagnosis rates has suffered substantially.

SDM for Autistic NDIS participants

Supported decision making (SDM) needs more development for autistic people; the autism sector has a lot to learn especially from SDM practices for people with Intellectual Disability.

A4 suggests that the NDIS should support development of SDM policy and practice for Autistic NDIS participants. To this end, we suggest consideration be given to:

1. developing an evidence-base for SDM for Autistic participants;

2. a program of individualised SDM plans that are documented for each Autistic participant who needs explicit SDM in their supports; and
3. measuring and reporting SDM effects and outcomes for Autistic participants.

A4 thanks the NDIS Review for its commitment to improving the NDIS.

Yours sincerely

4/09/2023 