From:	McKenzie, Corri <Corri.McKenzie@ndis.gov.au>
To:	Bob Buckley <convenor@a4.org.au>
Subject:	Re: progressing from our meeting 4/8/2024 [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date:	Thu, 5 Sep 2024 23:31:54 +0000

Hi Bob

Thanks for your time yesterday, I really appreciated the opportunity to meet and enjoyed our discussion. Thanks also for sharing this with me.

I have made some changes to the below, which I would be comfortable for you to share.

Happy to talk further if you don't agree with my changes!

I am also keen to get to work on some questions - I will email you with some suggestions early next week.

Many thanks

Corri

From: Bob Buckley <convenor@a4.org.au>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 9:12 AM
To: McKenzie, Corri <Corri.McKenzie@ndis.gov.au>
Subject: progressing from our meeting 4/8/2024

Hi

is the following acceptable for me to share with the autism sector?

I do not intend to share the frank & forthright brief I gave you beyond my Board and a very few key players.

The following seeks to offer slightly more developed proposal than where we got to yesterday. It is just a proposal at this stage,.

Bob

A4's co-convenor met with Corri McKenzie, Deputy CEO of the NDIA on 4/8/2024.

A4 provided a briefing paper that was partially discussed. Corri said she'd read it in full later.

The main outcomes of the meeting were:

1. A4 communicated that A4 has been excluded from most of the consultation, advisory and co-design activity since the NDIS started. This is unacceptable and cannot continue.
    a. Ms McKenzie recognised A4's multiple concerns.
    b. This issue was raised at the previous RFO Forum where Ms McKenzie agreed to meet further to discuss.
    c. The previous involvement of A4 in the RFO process was especially unsuccessful and both parties agreed that A4 participating in the current round of groups was unlikely to be an effective solution - another approach is needed.

2. Both parties agreed that A4 has previously made practical suggestions that the NDIS has so far failed to initiate, such as properly recording the full DSM-5 diagnosis report (which is a functional assessment). The parties agreed that the new legislation essentially demands this change in relation to autistic participants.
3. Both parties agree that autism is a complex issue. For example, the 2022 ABS SDAC reported 41% growth in autism diagnosis, slightly increased severe/profound disability (core limitations). The NDIA's current approach fails to recognise the associated challenges and is not effective and beneficial for autistic NDIS participants. There are many other autism-related issues that the NDIA ignores. The NDIS needs effective strategies, policies and programs for autistic NDIS participants as these do not currently exist.
4. A4 and the NDIA will trial another approach to consultation, advisory and co-design with A4. The details are being developed.
5. The approach will involve identifying issues/problems and getting a timely written response from A4. What happens following delivery of A4's written response to an issue is yet to be discussed and agreed.

A4 believes that a formal process for progressing the issue arising needs to be managed.

The suggestion following develops the suggestion for the meeting. A4 suggests that typically, the steps are:

1. Agreement to consider an issue/problem.
2. Agreement on the problem description.
3. A4 (or the autism sector) provides their written response
4. Research and information gathering may be required
5. NDIA and A4 meet to discuss and explore the written response.
6. NDIA to include written response and further information in program of co-design and development in reform.
7. NDIA to report back on how the written response has been included and 'close the loop'.
8. A4 will continue to participate in RFO Quarterly Forum to monitor development and progress of the reform program of work. This will include monitoring, review and reporting of deliverables and outcomes.

This should be seen as a waterfall model; go back to a previous stage if more work is needed in previous stages.

The records from the process must be preserved; they are part of the intellectual capital of the NDIA and the disability sector in Australia. The process management must report and explain failures and missed deadlines.

This process will form part of the different ways in which the NDIA is working to ensure the reform program includes voices of people with disability and their representative organisations, including the autism sector.

A4 is keen to hear input from the rest of the sector, and to know whether others in the autism sector want to participate in these processes.

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Bob Buckley
Co-convenor, *Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia* (A4)
website: http://a4.org.au/

A4, a recognised disability representative organisation (DRO), advocates for autistic people, their families, carers and associates. A4 is internet based so that Australians anywhere can participate in

and contribute to A4's advocacy for autistic people, their carers and allies.

A4 recognises the Traditional Owners of lands in Australia; we respect their elders past, present and emerging. Sovereignty was never ceded.

Recipients of correspondence from A4, especially politicians and government officials, are all subject to A4's policy on unanswered questions: see http://a4.org.au/node/1419.

The autism issue is that autistic people just don't deliver on the plans, dreams and expectations in other peoples' heads.