

Subject: formal complaint about Riley article 18/4/2026
From: "Bob Buckley (A4)" <convenor@a4.org.au>
Date: 18/04/2026, 7:56 am
To: news@thenightly.com.au

Dear madam/sir

I write to complain formally about your publication of [MARK RILEY: Drastic changes coming to NDIS as unofficial rorting by parents is increasing cost to taxpayers](#) 18/4/2026

This piece is grossly inaccurate. Especially, it accuses parents of autistic of rorting the NDIS. It claims:

The only reasonable assumption is that parents have been gaming the system, exaggerating their children's symptoms in order to secure packages.

But it cites no actual evidence.

It shows an alarming misunderstanding of autism and the NDIS.

- an autism diagnosis has two severity levels, not one "stage" as Riley claims.
- NDIS data indicates autism diagnosis rates for children under 6 years old have declined, not increased, in recent times.
- the NDIS does not give funds to children or their families, it funds invoices for services provided to autistic children. So, Mr Riley accuses families of dragging kids to therapies they don't need to boost the accounts of others.

Since the NDIS started, the rate at which families of autistic children access Carer Allowance (child) has dropped substantially. This is a long running benefit that puts actual dollars into family's accounts. This is where rorting would happen.

Your paper and Mr Riley owe parents of autistic children an apology. You should also publish a correction.

--

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