

**Submission  
No 76**

**INQUIRY INTO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL  
DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME AND THE PROVISION  
OF DISABILITY SERVICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Miss Gabrielle Ringger

**Date Received:** 14 July 2018

---

## Submission to the Parliamentary Enquiry in to the Implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme

I am writing this submission to outline my thoughts and opinions of the scheme from both my view point as a participant and as an employee of the National Disability Insurance Agency. When I had my first planning meeting with a local area coordinator I didn't know anything about the scheme or what to ask for. I had informed myself as much as possible about the scheme but was very hesitant to participate. In fact, without having been influenced by a a good friend and Guide Dogs representative, I probably wouldn't have applied to become a participant of the scheme because I didn't see the merits in joining it. I also didn't want to have to prove my disabilities (vision and hearing) are permanent or provide evidence for other medical conditions as I have a rare genetic syndrome that is complicated to explain and understand.

I found the process of applying to become a participant fairly quick and easy. In my first plan I had elected for a plan manager to take care of all administrative tasks including service agreements with different disability service providers. In hindsight, I found my first year of being a participant of the NDIS both positive and negative. I received substantial funding for my Guide Dog which I was able to utilise in meeting her every need including vet visits, medications, grooming, etc. I also utilised my transport allowance which enabled me to get to work at the Bankstown office of the National Disability Insurance Agency when I became a planner.

My experience of my first plan didn't meet my expectations or what I had heard people getting out of the scheme. The plan management team also prevented me from attaining my goals and I had to follow up with them insistently for completing paperwork about a braille computer being repaired. When I called the plan management organisation; the person who answered the phone said straightaway without asking for my details that "It is the NDIA's fault". I don't know how the person on the phone would know that because they hadn't asked me for my personal details or verified my identity. I was asked to complete a survey and provide feedback to the plan management organisation but when I said the feedback would be negative, they shut down their server so I couldn't give my feedback to the organisation. I made a complaint to the NDIS about this particular organisation and expressed my frustration and stress of having to chase them because they weren't completing my requests for information or distributing my funds to the disability service providers I was accessing.

My main concern with how the plan management organisation didn't take in to account nor did the NDIS address this issue that a person with disability who accesses the scheme has to prove their disabilities and to be on top of administering and organising/budgeting their funds. When I was trying to use the funds I had been allocated in my 2017 plan, I often didn't have the energy to deal with the disability service providers and working full time left me with limited time to be able to call or arrange the services I needed. I was significantly sick during my 2017 plan and wasn't able to fully

access or implement many supports I needed. I also found that the plan managers who were responsible for sending in invoices to the NDIA for approval always took considerable time before I was reimbursed.

I have worked as an employee of the National Disability Insurance Agency. This was an eye opening experience. In my job as a planner I was to elicit important information from the people with disabilities, their families and carers and then write up their plan. As an employee of the NDIA, I was able to fully understand the scheme and acquired knowledge that has enabled me to help my friends, strangers and that I have used to my advantage in my 2018 plan.

Finally, I would like to put forward a suggestion that all employees who work for the NDIA should be given comprehensive training about disabilities and should have a personal experience of living one day as a person with a disability. This would not only allow the employees to understand what disability is and the limitations and difficulties it places on individuals, families and carers. I think that this would be beneficial because it would allow employees to experience a disability and understand how that disability impacts every facet of one's life. I also recommend that experts on particular disabilities, for example, multiple sclerosis, autism, blindness, etc should be employed and provide accurate information on the range of services, tasks and activities that particular disability may use rather than at the moment relying on the employee's understanding or lack of understanding about that disability and it's impact on that person's life.

Gabrielle Ringger