

**Submission
No 144**

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

Name: Ms Elizabeth Wall Smith

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The Director
Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health and Community Services
Parliament House
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Sydney NSW 2000

I would like to bring your attention to the the Guardian article, Complaints about NSW disability services at highest level in a decade. State accused of ‘clocking off’ ahead of transition to NDIS as ombudsman’s figures show reports of mistreatment, assault and neglect up by 14 per cent in the past year.

Please find the attached article:

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/nov/04/complaints-about-nsw-disability-services-at-highest-level-in-a-decade?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Advocacy in all its forms seeks to ensure that people, particularly the most vulnerable in society are able to; defend and safeguard their rights; have their voice heard on issues that are important to them; and have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.

Need for ongoing funding for advocacy services for people with a disability is particularly expressed during periods of significant change such as the current transition to the NDIS. The NDIS can be an opportunity for those qualified to benefit where the best outcomes can be assured through robust advocacy. This can be best achieved by continuing to fund disability advocacy services allowing for the existing expertise to remain in place beyond June 2020.

Stopping funding beyond June 2018 will result in people with disability no longer having access to local advocacy on relevant issues, including education, employment, transport, health and fair treatment and will predictably lead to poor outcomes and erode the purpose of the NDIS.

It takes time and effort to understand the NDIS. Too many people with disability and carers of people with disability in NSW are finding it impossible to get the best from the NDIS. At this nexus advocacy is an essential component for ensuring the best outcome for those concerned.

Disability advocacy agencies should ideally continue to be state funded outside the NDIS to enable advocates to do their traditional work of standing up for the rights of people in need and to support the evolutionary process through which the NDIS is transitioning.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Wall Smith