

Submission
No 146

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 4 August 2018

Partially
Confidential

Fri 3 Aug 2018

The Director,

Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health and Community Services,
Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney

**Submission to the Inquiry into the implementation of the
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the provision
of disability services in NSW**

To whom it may concern,

My name is I'm a resident of Sydney for just on 5 decades, and I experience life with the added challenge of having a severe physical disability/medical condition of childhood onset. I use an electric wheelchair to get around, live independently in my community with the support of an NDIS package, modified public housing and various local services.

***Re Use of Disability Advocacy Services:** I've had a long association with each of PDCN (Glebe), MDAA (Inner West) and IDEAS (Ultimo office). At various times over the past 25 years, these disability advocacy organisations have provided me excellent independent information and advocacy support to address public housing concerns, health matters, NDIS review issues, promote peer support networks, and guidance on equal employment opportunities.*

A case in point: advocacy support for housing

I required support to address ongoing systemic failures of, and incompetent case-handling at, Housing NSW to adequately deal with issues of maintenance, risk to safety of self/disability support workers/visitors, and changes in circumstances. In total it took 8 years for my concerns to be addressed (2008-2015).

***Initially,** I worked on this alone for 3½ years – with some support from my GP. With heightening exhaustion, I then asked for assistance from a local specialist disability advocacy service. After a brief time, on a waiting list, I was provided with valuable assistance from an experienced disability advocate. The case took a further 4 years. Living life with a life-long disability that heavily depleted my energy levels, I could not have continued pursuing my case without this vital skilled support. I was provided with professional constructive*

advice and assistance throughout many obstacles put before me - and during two hospitalisations.

*Finally, with all avenues exhausted, my advocate helped me to put an application to the NSW Ombudsman Office whom took on my case. **After 8 years** a satisfactory completion was reached and changes to ensure Housing NSW followed its own policy and procedures. I know there is no way I could have continued this process unassisted for the duration it took, and the skillset of a disability advocate was **central to the outcome of this case.***

*This one experience **demonstrates** my point that such specialist services are an essential resource for many people with disabilities (and their families) throughout their lives. Our current services are proudly diverse, skilled, free and independent. **Please do not dismantle them nor disregard their value to a just and civil society.***

Why it is important for the NSW government to continue funding disability advocacy

*Continuing to fully fund **independent** disability advocacy, information and support as a core essential service is necessary. **Whom will then support us with issues such as education, discrimination, health, justice, transport, employment, community access - all areas not covered by the NDIS.***

Why?

- *The Federal government is very explicit that the NDIS will not fund individual advocacy or systemic advocacy.*
- *Only 10% of people with a disability will be eligible for NDIS funding.*
- *Organisations under the NDIS umbrella are service providers, not advocates.*
- *The NDIS can't help people facing difficult situations - whether relating to education, housing, violence and abuse, transport or child protection.*
- *NDIS representatives won't have a seat at the table to help government plan and make better decisions, nor address things we need to change.*

Yours sincerely

