

Ms Bonnie Allan
Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS
Parliament House, Canberra ACT

By email

12 December 2022

Dear Ms Allan

Thankyou for your letter of 5 December re the opportunity to comment on some particular testimony heard by the Committee on 17 November in its Inquiry into Capability and Culture of the NDIA.

The section highlighted primarily refers to comments I made to sector representatives on 1 July 2022. I noted that in the corporate world, customer service companies such as telcos and electricity retailers have been significantly reducing the number of plans they offer, often down to just a handful, in an attempt to reduce complexity and thereby improve customer service levels. This was in contrast with the NDIA which must by legislation construct and provide plans to each participant, more than half a million, which are individually responsive to personal circumstances and aspirations.

The sole point of this comparison is to give some context to the scale of the challenge facing the Agency as an operating entity. It was certainly not to suggest that the Agency should operate with a handful of plans like a telco; nor that an NDIS plan is equivalent to a telco plan, and especially that I or the Agency are not fully aware that behind each plan is a person.

I remain proud of the efforts all staff of the Agency make to meet the scale of that challenge, for each participant every day, and of the progress made in improving participant service levels over time as set out in detail in the regular Quarterly Reports.

The other comment in the section referred to a supposed “god power” accruing to the CEO in the recently amended Act with the introduction of the ability to vary existing plans, in addition to reviewing and creating a new plan. I will not here go into detail about these legislative provisions, but am confident members of the Committee fully understand the background here, including that the variation decision-making power was always consistent with the already existing plan review power that had existed since 2013, and that in any event the specific drafting of a Bill is not something decided on by the CEO or Agency.

I continue to support and hope for the very best for the NDIS and all its participants, families and carers, and wish the Committee well with its work.

Yours sincerely

Martin Hoffman