



Melbourne Disability Institute

31 July 2024

Ms Apolline Kohen
Secretary, Senate Community Affairs Legislative Committee
Parliament House

Via email to: Community.Affairs.Sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Kohen,

I am pleased to provide the following information to supplement my evidence to the Senate Community Affairs Legislative Committee on 24 July, as requested by Senators Steele-John and Reynolds.

Senator Steele-John requested: Could you check what you said in your Radio National interview with Patricia Karvelas, when you said "if additional reports are needed, the Agency will commission and pay for them" against the legislation?

I was interviewed by Patricia Karvelas on Radio National on 28 March, 2024, following the tabling of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) Bill 2024.

It was a wide-ranging interview about the NDIS Review and the new legislation.

The NDIS Review recommended that a comprehensive needs assessment and any additional reports needed by participants should be commissioned and paid for by the NDIA. Our view was that this is necessary because, today, some participants can pay for assessments and reports, while many others cannot.

The new legislation provides for a comprehensive needs assessment, in line with the recommendations from the Review, which would be commissioned and paid for by the Agency.

While the legislation does not explicitly refer to additional reports and how they should be commissioned and paid for, once the legislation passes and given that this is enabling legislation, this could be included in the Rules, which of course will be subject to extensive engagement.

Senator Reynolds requested: Can you provide me with the detail of when you received the briefing [on Redbridge], or separate briefings on the separate reports, who else received it and who briefed you on that material?

The NDIS Review included an unprecedented level of engagement with the disability community. This included receiving nearly 4,000 submissions, hearing from more than 10,000 people, reaching out to hard-to-reach groups through Disability Representative Organisations and an average of 26 engagements a month. We also worked with a Co-Group from Disability Representative Organisations. These engagements were deep and were critical to our Report and findings. In fact, we could not have made our recommendations without these deep insights from people with disability, their families and the disability community.

The Redbridge research was commissioned by the NDIA. It was not commissioned by or used by the Review.

The Agency organised on-line briefings by Redbridge for its own purposes and also invited the Co-Chairs. I have checked my records and these invitations were for 16 March, 5 October, 9 October and 1 November 2023, but I

cannot recall how many of these verbal briefings I attended. I do not have a record or clear recollection of the content of any briefings I attended and, as I said in my evidence last week, the Redbridge research did not influence the NDIS Review recommendations. Our Final Report was provided to the Government on 27 October.

Yours sincerely

Professor Bruce Bonyhady AM
Former Co-Chair NDIS Review
Executive Chair and Director, Melbourne Disability Institute