

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee
Public Hearing – 6 August 2024
NDIS Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No.1) Bill 2024
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
National Disability Insurance Agency

Topic: Fraudulent Claims

Question reference number: NDIA IQ24-000041

Question asked by: Jordon Steele-John

Type of Question: Spoken. Hansard Pages: 3-4

Date set by the Committee for the return of answer: 7 August 2024

Question:

Senator STEELE-JOHN: This was tabled at the estimates session, at which you were present. I requested of the agency that you provide the number of times that such claims have been identified, including the claims as were listed—birdseed, TV antennas et cetera—and the answer that your agency gave and that the minister signed off on cites a participant. Just so that we're absolutely clear, the result of that was two to three weeks of the most horrendous media coverage that implied that these types of claims were common practice. All of this went unchallenged, or was in fact promoted, by government members, and it appears from the evidence that you provided to an official question on notice that your agency was able to cite a single participant that made those claims, out of 660,000 participants in the scheme. Ms Falkingham: I think there's a lot in there that is not for me to comment on. What I'll comment on, though, is that my recollection of that estimates hearing is that Deputy CEO John Dardo, who leads our integrity work, was referencing a single case. I'm very happy to look at that question on notice and come back to you again in relation to the broader question—in relation to the numbers—but that question on notice, from my recollection, went to the specific participant that Deputy CEO John Dardo was speaking to.

...

Senator STEELE-JOHN: ...But, again, this is a statement that was made by the minister on 25 June. I acknowledge that you can't answer questions on behalf of the minister, but was the agency in any way consulted in relation to the release put out on 25 June with reference to participants in the multiple having claimed these items?

Ms Falkingham: We will always provide background information for ministers to craft their media releases. That's consistent with practice in any government department or agency. I don't have the minister's media release in front of me, as you would imagine, right now, but I've just had my attention drawn to the answer to that question on notice, which is from the minister. As I said, I will go back and have another look at that Hansard, but my memory is that Mr Dardo was referencing a particular case. I repeat, though, that we do have widespread information in relation to how funds are not being used in accordance with the operating principles or guidance that we would expect, and that is what this process is trying to do: it's to clarify for everyone what you can and cannot use your NDIS funding for. But I'm very happy to take it on notice and have a look at that Hansard.

Answer:

Please refer to NDIA SQ24-000148.