



Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
Answer to Question on Notice

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Reference No: SQ20-000198

OUTREACH CALLS TO PARTICIPANTS

Hearing: 30 April 2020

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

On 27 May 2020 the Minister for the NDIS was interviewed on ABC Radio Adelaide by David Bevan where the Minister stated:

"The 18th March, well ahead of anyone understanding this case, a clear directive was given to me for the agency to contact all 64,000 very, very, very vulnerable Australians as we went into pandemic..."

Can the Minister representing the Minister for the NDIS advise:

a. How did the Minister determine who the 64,000 very, very, very vulnerable Australians are?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency's classification of 'vulnerable participants' includes all National Disability Insurance Scheme participants residing in Supported Independent Living, Specialist Disability Accommodation and young people (under 55 years) living in residential aged care, and/or participants who are:

- receiving high levels of 'Core daily activities' supports;
- in the Complex Support Needs Pathway;
- receiving Disability Related Health Supports (including Community Nursing, Assistive Technology (AT) for Personal Care/Safety, Diet Management);
- receiving Behavioural Supports;
- over 55 years and have carers over the age of 65 years, or over 50 years if the carer identifies as Indigenous;
- in remote Indigenous communities; or
- living in vulnerable housing (i.e. hostels).



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Question:

b. How many of these vulnerable people were contacted by the NDIA and how were they contacted?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is contacting vulnerable participants directly, or their nominee or guardian. Where participants have significant communication needs, behaviours of concerns, and/or required high levels of personal care on a daily basis, support coordinators or providers may be the more appropriate points of contact.

For the participants who reside in group settings such as Supported Independent Living facilities, contact can be made via their Support Coordinator or the Providers' House Supervisors.

As at 29 May 2020, the NDIA has attempted to make 53,301 proactive, outbound calls to vulnerable participants. Of these 50,898 calls have been completed with 2,403 calls unsuccessful.



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Question:

c. Was the same approach taken for vulnerable Australians in regional, remote and bushfire affected regions?

Answer:

Yes. In addition, the National Disability Insurance Agency utilised its network of Community Connectors to help reach vulnerable participants residing in remote areas. Vulnerable participants living in bushfire affected regions have been and continue to be contacted and supported as appropriate to address any changed circumstances.



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Question:

d. How many of these 64,000 vulnerable people failed to be contacted by the NDIA?

Answer:

As at 29 May 2020, the National Disability Insurance Agency has attempted to make 53,301 proactive, outbound calls to vulnerable participants. Of these, 50,898 have been completed with 2,403 calls unsuccessful.

The NDIA continues to attempt to make contact with those vulnerable participants who have been unable to be contacted.



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Reference No: SQ20-000202

OUTREACH CALLS TO PARTICIPANTS

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Question:

e. What follow up action was taken for those vulnerable people who could not be contacted by the NDIA?

Answer:

Where vulnerable participants are unable to be contacted, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will continue to keep attempting to contact them, and/or any other nominated contact persons.

Where the NDIA is unable to contact the participant or their nominated contact person, the Agency will work with either Support Coordinator and/or the participant's service provider(s) to check in on the participant.

If all contact attempts fail and there is concern for the participant's wellbeing, the Agency or Support Coordinator can refer to the local police to conduct a welfare check on the participant.



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Question:

f. Were any face-to-face visits made to any of these vulnerable Australians as a result of the contact made to them and if so, how many face-to-face visits were conducted?

Answer:

Due to the COVID-19 physical restrictions in place, the National Disability Insurance Agency did not undertake any face-to-face contacts as part of the vulnerable participant outbound calls. Instead, participants were contacted via telephone or skype.

National Disability Insurance Scheme Service providers and Support Coordinators regularly maintained face to face contact with participants where appropriate.



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Question:

g. How many times have these 64,000 vulnerable Australians been contacted by the NDIA during the pandemic?

Answer:

Each vulnerable participant is contacted at least once by the National Disability Insurance Agency. When the participant was unable to be contacted, multiple contact attempts were made over several days – including to the participant's other nominated contact persons.

In some cases, follow-up calls may be required to ensure supports are in place and/or adjustments to plans are made where necessary.



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Question:

h. What, if any, assistance was provided to these vulnerable Australians who were contacted by the NDIA?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is calling vulnerable participants to ensure they are continuing to receive and have access to their key National Disability Insurance Scheme supports during the COVID-19 pandemic. These calls are providing participants with information and advice on state based COVID-19 mainstream and community information and the Home Shopping Delivery Code.

The NDIA is also assisting participants with any changes to their plans if required, including providing assistance to find Support Coordination services.

As at 29 May 2020, 1,299 participants have had a Light Touch Plan Review occur within 30 days of the outbound call.



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Question:

i. Were any referrals made to National Quality & Safeguards Commission following contact by the NDIA with the vulnerable Australians referred by the Minister?

Answer:

Yes, the National Disability Insurance Agency made seven referrals to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and four to the Western Australian Department of Communities.



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Question:

j. Were any referrals made to police following contact by the NDIA with the vulnerable Australians referred to by the Minister?

Answer:

Yes, the National Disability Insurance Agency made one referral to police for a welfare check of a participant.