

To the committee,

Not great when I'm homeless and arguing with the NDIS trying to obtain the reasoning for their planning decisions so that I can actually argue with their reasoning. I recommend priority access to FOI for NDIS participants trying to obtain planning information and more intensive and aggressive interrogation of their reasoning for refusing documents required to appeal a review of a decision. The NDIA uses the FOI processes in such a way that they can effectively refuse necessary documents by blowing out the lead time so that the review of a decision period lapses before clients can view their planning information. They claimed to have tens of thousands of documents specifically about me after less than 2 years which is incredibly concerning but ridiculously claimed this was sufficient reason to deny access to the information due to reviewing them being an undue burden.

The reason that NDIS participants need priority access is that when a planner clearly records homelessness, serious safety and risk issues, they can then feed into the risk matrix this,

"How safe or unsafe do you feel in your home? Safe"

I can provide them with multiple letters from emergency departments, doctors, specialists etc and get this fed into the matrix,

"How many times have you been to the hospital in the last 12 months? 0"

The use of FOI legislation as the sole point by which NDIS participants can access information recorded about them poses a serious safety risk to participants. The FOI legislation works but it's an inappropriate avenue for verifying the accurate recording of information in real-time input by the Minister that abuses FOI legislation in order to refuse to communicate with the people they purport to serve. I can tell that the Minister is dangerously out of control and putting people at risk many months after the fact. FOI legislation should not be the only way that government agencies communicate with those they purport to serve. Government agencies and their ministers need to accept accountability when they refuse to communicate effectively with people and understand that is an important part of their own job not something to be passed off as something solely to be covered by a separate branch dealing with FOI requests.

Robert Heron