

INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENTS – NOTES

Thank you for undertaking an inquiry into the independent assessments under the NDIS.

A brief background about myself; is I am a 45 year old female who left university to work full time and then was led down a different path due to the diagnosis of a chronic illness. Over the decades, I have learnt resilience and found my voice and I am currently a member of the Disability Access and Inclusion Committee for my local council. In 2017 I became an NDIS self-managed participant and it has helped alleviate the stress and burden upon my family and I that we would go through daily. I am proud to live in Australia knowing the level of care and support that is provided to people with disabilities.

I have listed points of concern below regarding the independent assessments that are being proposed.

- It puts stress and pressure on the person with the disability.
- Don't put the spotlight on the person with the disability, but use the professionals who are already part of our lives and know our history well to give assessments that you are asking for.
- Make the health professionals who give evidence for participant plans be more accountable and ensure the information they give is not misleading and truthful instead of requiring the participant to prove their disability and situation.
- Some people with a disability can be affected in a negative way, when having to meet someone new like an independent assessor. The same information could have been provided by their own family specialists.
- As a person with a disability, I would really like the choice of who I see and why when it comes to my health. Sometimes I can feel like I need to prove my disability.

- Even though the independent assessments are going to be free, ultimately someone does pay for them. Where is this money coming from and could it be better spent in NDIS support budgets.
- Due to the nature of my chronic illness which is Multiple Sclerosis it can fluctuate, become more apparent to see, become less noticeable, change throughout the day and effect me differently even depending on the temperature I am exposed to at the time! You would not be able to get a true and accurate assessment from anyone with a chronic illness and/or disability from one or two interviews.
- The assessor such as an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist might be experts in their particular field but lack knowledge and expertise to see the complexity of my disability.
- Throughout my life I have had many medical assessments, please don't make me require any more.
- Will the independent assessor be in mandatory communication with the person's health specialist/s eg, my GP and/or neurologist? Can the independent assessor speak to my health professionals rather than me as a participant or potential participant? Not everyone is able to speak for themselves or have an advocate who will. It puts an enormous amount of stress and unnecessary worry on the person with the disability. By an independent assessor doing their research first with my professional/s, that would help extremely by getting accurate, timely and expert information which also lessens the burden on the participant.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope it is helpful in some way. I follow this with a keen interest and wait for the outcomes of the inquiry.