

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 5

Question No: 206

Topic: Outsourcing NDIS Services + NSW Enabling Bill

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

What systems will the Government be putting in place to ensure that individuals, particularly those who are unable to advocate for themselves, will receive the services they require if disability services are privatised?

Answer:

There are a range of supports in place available to people with disability to assist them to make-decisions, self-advocate and navigate the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) regardless of whether they access government-run, not for profit or private services:

- Local area coordinators and planners in the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will provide decision-making support to the participant in the planning process and participants are welcome to bring a family member, friend or another support person to appointments with planners to assist them in decision-making.
- The NDIA could also fund other supports to help participants to express their views, clarify their goals and ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities and the consequences of their choices.
- If a participant feels that they need more long-term support to build their capacity to self-advocate then funding for training and other support may be built into their plan.
- The NDIA will also provide information and referrals to relevant programs to enable people with disability to develop self-advocacy skills and engage in mainstream and community activities.

Under the External Merits Review initiative, funded by the Department of Social Services, a person with disability, their families, or carers, can get the assistance of a skilled support person to guide them through an external review of an NDIA decision if so required. Where issues of a complex or novel nature are identified limited legal assistance may also be provided at no cost to the applicant.

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Participants can also access broader advocacy support through the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP):

- NDAP aims to promote the rights of Australians living with a disability by providing an advocacy service that ensures full and equal enjoyment of all human rights.
- NDAP operates outside of the NDIA, to ensure that participants are able to receive impartial advice and advocacy if required.
- It is funded by the Commonwealth Government, and some other advocacy programs are also funded by state and territory governments.