



**Mareeba District Flexi Support Association Inc**

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National Disability Insurance Agency  
Australia

To whom it may concern,

**RE: Access and eligibility policy with independent assessments – Request not to change current model**

FlexiChoice is a rural disability support service which covers a wide region of the Tablelands and FNQ district. We deliver CORE supports as well as Support Coordination and Plan Management services. I am writing to request that the changes suggested to introduce independent assessments as directed by NDIS, not be accepted. This request is strongly supported by what is actually happening in our community as evidenced below.

There has been a significant change in the overall ability of participants to work towards or achieve their outcomes as a direct result of quality assessments (OT functional assessments) which they have finally been able to access in the past 2 years since NDIS was introduced.

I have been in this position as CEO for 16 years and therefore can genuinely comment on the huge difference it has made for people with a disability to be able to receive **quality functional assessments** via NDIS funding from **quality assessors of their choice**. When assessors have the required time and proven background of skills and experience to perform an assessment of the participant, the result is quality information. This then forms a supportive framework for other support services to work from. We have seen a very clear difference in the ability to assist the person to build their capacity, skills and overall quality of life when we have this valuable assessment information as a resource. Outcomes and achievement of goals is evident every day in the cohort of participants we support.

The quality of the assessment requires experienced assessors/OT's (not new from University or simply holding some qualification) who have the required time to complete a 'quality' assessment. We have witnessed for the past 2 years the poor quality of NDIA and NDIA subcontracted intake assessments which stems from pressure to meet KPI's (insufficient time) and inexperienced, unskilled staff (NDIA/or their subcontracted services) conducting the assessment.

I believe that what NDIS is proposing would only reduce the quality of functional assessments for participants. The important point to note:

**Quality assessment = Quicker, better outcomes and progress towards independence.**

As an insurance model, the basis is to invest early for greater outcomes which will reduce support needed in the future.

**Poor assessments = poor outcomes, slower progress** and therefore **is economically inefficient** in the long run.

On behalf of FlexiChoice and the community of people with a disability and their carers whom we support, I request that you do not change the existing model, and continue to allow participants to choose an OT of their choice to conduct a quality functional assessment. This small part of NDIS funding makes a huge impact upon the overall quality of the participant's future life and the positive outcomes possible. That is what NDIS was created for.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,



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