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Linda Blaik’s determination to support people with disability knows no boundaries, and for the first time in a long time she said she felt respected, heard and valued.

Invited to a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Co-design Plan and Plan Approval Letter workshop at a conference centre in Melbourne, Linda, who is blind, was one of 20 NDIS participants who took part.

There to help improve an existing NDIS Plan and Plan Approval Letter sent to people each time they receive their NDIS plan, Linda said she, her support worker, other participants and National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) staff all worked together over 2 days listening to various views and ideas.

Designing a more condensed, easier-to-read version, Linda said she felt participants would be much happier about the new Plan and Plan Approval Letter the Agency is looking to send out.

‘Ever since day dot when our Plan and Plan Approval letters have been sent out, they have had a lot of repeated information in them which is irrelevant,’ she said.

‘The original Plan and Planning Approval Letter contained a lot of personal information and when you’re dealing with providers, they all ask to see your letter.

‘You don’t have to show them, but most say they need to see it, so often you do show them, and there’s a lot of information in it you really don’t want them or anyone else to know.

‘Letters describe who we are, where we have lived and with whom, our disability, how it affects us and then it mentions all our goals.

‘We know all that information. Why repeat it in every Plan and Planning Approval Letter we get. It was senseless and frustrating,’ Linda said.

Coming away from the NDIS Co-design Plan and Plan Approval Letter Workshop, Linda said she really enjoyed the way it was run and felt others did too.

‘NDIA staff wanted us to be authentic and honest and to hear how our experiences dealing with the Agency has made us feel.

‘I was happy to contribute; it was a great discussion; everyone was respectful, and we all got to talk.

‘This time staff guaranteed all our feedback was taken onboard, and they even reported back in with us to ensure everything we talked about was captured.

‘Now the new Plan and Plan Approval Letter will be built into PACE, the Agency’s IT system, and the letter will be introduced later this year.

‘It was so good to be part of the consultation process and I’m confident we’ve produced a pretty good letter,’ Linda said.

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