Fraud fusion taskforce investigates $1 billion in NDIS payments in first year

29 November 2023

The Australian Government’s commitment to stopping fraud is helping to protect the funding that supports Australians living with disability and saving the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) millions of dollars, NDIS Minister Bill Shorten MP said today.

The Fraud Fusion Taskforce (FFT) recently marked 12 months since its establishment, with data showing the significant progress being made to improve government capability to prevent and respond to fraud against the NDIS.

The Taskforce, co-led by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and Services Australia, consists of 16 government agencies working together to stop criminals from defrauding the world-first Scheme that provides life changing support to hundreds of thousands of Australians with disability.

Services Australia has been working with participating agencies to understand and monitor the threat fraud actors pose to government programs and payments.

Using prevention and detection tactics, Services Australia is responding to organised fraud by targeting criminals that seek to exploit government payments.

Recent FFT data showed that as of 31 October:

- $356.5 million in NDIS payments is currently under investigation.
- 43 active NDIS fraud cases (up from 28 in September 2021) with an estimated fraud value of $35 million.
- 18 NDIS prosecutions in progress with an alleged fraud value of $18.3 million.
- The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission took 92 compliance actions against providers and individuals, including the issuing of 43 banning orders.
- Services Australia has 35 active investigations under the Fraud Fusion Taskforce.

“The Taskforce is achieving encouraging results, investigating more than 100 cases in the past 12 months with over $1 billion of NDIS funding under investigation over that time.

There has been a significant rise in the number of investigations, prosecutions and providers being banned or issued with compliance notices,” Minister Shorten said.

“However those numbers only tell part of the story. By establishing this Taskforce, there is now increased sharing of information across government, which means more eyes looking for and catching any crook looking to earn a quick buck from the NDIS, while better protecting the funding of our participants.

“Putting criminals in prison is one thing, but by sharing intelligence the FFT is increasing government capability to disrupt the actions of more serious and organised crime networks.

“We can identify patterns of unethical behaviour and then put mechanisms in place to stop those actions occurring in the future, making it harder to do the wrong thing and easier to do the right thing – which will future-proof the integrity of the Scheme and help ensure it is here for generations to come.”

A total of 17,207 tip offs were received in the most recent financial year, up 78 per cent (9,673) from the same period in the previous year.

“The Government has made the issue of fraud against the NDIS a focus, and what that has done is increase the level of conversation on the issue,” Minister Shorten said

“We’re seeing participants, their families and supporters, as well as Agency staff all being more aware of potentially suspect provider behaviour and they are reporting it – knowing that every tip-off received by the Agency is assessed.

“Anyone looking to exploit the Scheme – at the expense of Australians living with disability – should be warned. We have cracked down on fraud so if you run the gauntlet, you will be caught.”

Anyone with information about suspected fraud involving the NDIS should contact the NDIS fraud helpline on 1800 650 717, or email fraudreporting@ndis.gov.au.

Anyone concerned about the way in which NDIS supports and services are being provided, including suspicions of fraud, can contact the NDIS Commission.

Complaints can be made by:

- Phoning: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677.
- Contacting the National Relay Service and asking for 1800 035 544.
- Completing a complaint contact form .

Key taskforce cases

December 2022 – Operation Pegasus

More than 50 partner agency members, including forensic specialists and personnel from the NDIA, disbanded a Western Sydney crime syndicate alleged to have fraudulently claimed more than $10 million in NDIS funding since 2017.

January / February 2023

The NDIS Commission executed 7 banning orders, 2 suspensions and one revocation of registration against five NDIS providers and five individuals operating in Melbourne.

(Details of compliance actions taken by the NDIS Commission are published here)

February 2023 – Further arrests in Western Sydney

An investigation by the Fraud Fusion Taskforce led to the execution of three search warrants in Western Sydney.

The activity led to the arrest and charging of one man, and two other men issued with Court Attendance Notices relating to fraudulent activity totalling more than $3.3 million.

June 2023 – Operation Ivory

A multi-agency investigation resulted in four search warrants being executed across the Western Sydney premises of four NDIS service providers, alleged to have defrauded the Scheme of in excess of $1.5 million.

The NDIS Commission also undertook a number of enforcement activities on the day.

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