

16 July 2019

The Hon Stuart Robert MP
Minister for National Disability Insurance Scheme, Minister for Government Services
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Dear Minister Robert,

Disability Advocacy Victoria Inc. is the peak body for independent disability advocacy agencies in Victoria. We are contacting you because disability advocacy services in Victoria are in a state of crisis.

We would like to raise our concern about the increased continued demand on our sector due to an increase in advocacy required to address difficulties people with disabilities are experiencing with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). A recent survey of disability advocacy agencies in Victoria revealed that agencies were spending more hours on matters relating to the NDIS than any other issue.

The NDIS was designed to deliver “no disadvantage” and yet advocacy is overwhelmed with hundreds, possibly thousands, of people dependent on their advocate to secure necessary disability support and access the system designed to provide it.

The difficulty advocacy agencies are now facing is that they are unable to provide the same level of service to people with disabilities that they were providing prior to the NDIS. More importantly, as a consequence, Victorians with disabilities now have less access to advocacy services than they used to. No doubt advocacy agencies in other states are experiencing similar issues.

The attached information sheet reflects the dire situation advocacy agencies, and therefore Victorians with disabilities, find themselves in.

We believe that current expectations of advocacy agencies are unsustainable and that, as a consequence of this, Victorians with disabilities are suffering decreased services due to national issues. We accept that in theory the NDIS is meant to improve the quality of lives of people with disabilities, however the efforts required to access NDIS services are proving to be far too arduous and slow, and therefore diminishing the ability of advocacy agencies to assist Victorians with such extremely important issues as education, accommodation, employment and so on.

We emphasise and draw to your urgent attention the fact that that the establishment of the NDIS has taken over a high percentage of advocacy work for state advocacy agencies (both state- and federally-funded).

We would like to meet with you on behalf of Victorian disability advocacy agencies to discuss this current crisis with a view to returning service levels to people with disabilities to pre-NDIS levels. In particular, we would like to explore the possibility of the Commonwealth providing funding, or top-up funding, to state funded advocacy agencies – as well as additional core funding to federally-funded Victorian advocacy agencies – all of whom are now having to deal with a far higher level of national advocacy issues than ever before.

Yours faithfully,



Jan Ashford, Chairperson, Disability Advocacy Victoria Inc.