

## Independent Assessments

### Background

The rollout of independent assessments were a key reform in the Government's response to the 2019 Tune Review of the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*. The proposed new approach will see the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) engage 'independent assessors' to undertake functional capacity assessments to support access, planning and review processes in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

### Key messages

PWDA holds significant concerns about the Federal Government's planned changes to how people with disability will access the NDIS and how they will receive support.

Independent assessments will not resolve the current problems with the NDIS. Alongside the new process for determining individual plans and budgets, independent assessments may actually compound existing problems or even create new unintended ones.

While we all want greater consistency, we are very concerned this increasingly automated process will not adequately consider individual need and circumstance. Instead independent assessments will fundamentally alter the individualised and personalised nature of the NDIS.

Independent assessments have not been rigorously tested or undergone an independent evaluation. Consultation has been rushed and the questions and concerns of people with disability, their families and the organisations that support and represent them have not been addressed.

### Recommendations

**Recommendation 1** – That the Australian Government immediately cease the rollout compulsory assessments as currently planned.

**Recommendation 2** – That the Australian Government not proceed with the independent assessments proposal designed by the National Disability Insurance Agency and others.

**Recommendation 3** – That the Australian Government undertake a robust and transparent outcome evaluation of the current pilot of the new assessment process.

## A Voice of Our Own

This evaluation must be independent of the NDIA and be led by people with disability and the representative organisations that support them.

**Recommendation 4** – That the Australian Government not use independent assessments on people wanting to access the NDIS, or stay on the NDIS.

**Recommendation 5** – That the Australian Government not proceed with proposed legislation to rewrite the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* and its definition of what is reasonable and necessary under the Act.

**Recommendation 6** – That the Australian Government undertake robust, independent and transparent trials of alternative approaches to improving consistency in access and planning – such as allowing a person’s existing health professionals to complete assessments using the same tools.

**Recommendation 7** – That once the trials and evaluations are complete, the Australian Government engage in a meaningful co-design process with people with disability and their representative organisations that support them, to ensure a fair and consistent approach to both access to the scheme and planning and to ensure people with disability receive the support they need.

**Recommendation 8** – That the Australian Government create a bulk bill Medicare item, where people with disability in need of evidence for access and planning purposes in the scheme, can have the trusted professionals they choose bulk bill for the required evidence.

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