Villamanta
DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGAL SERVICE

Easy Read Submissions to the

Inquiry into the administration of the National Disability Insurance Scheme

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

15 July 2026

PO Box 7328
GEELONG WEST VIC 3218

ABN 32 690988 235

☎ Information: 1800 014 111
☎ Admin: 03 5260 1845
Email: legal@villamanta.org.au
Website: www.villamanta.org.au

Contents

About this document

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service wrote this submission.

We help people with disability understand and protect their rights

This is an Easy Read version of our submission.

The submission was made to a **Parliamentary inquiry** about how the National Disability Insurance Scheme, or **NDIS**, is being run.

A **parliamentary inquiry** is when a group of politicians from Parliament looks into an issue or problem to learn more about it.

We may refer to the NDIS as **the Scheme**.

What is this submission about?

The Australian Government has been focused on:

- reducing **fraud**
- reducing waste
- making the NDIS **financially sustainable**.

We agree these things are important.

But we say participant safety must also be a priority.

In this submission, we refer to the Australian Government as **the Government**.

Fraud is when someone lies, cheats, or tricks another person to get money, goods, services, or another benefit.

Financial sustainability means making sure the Scheme can continue into the future.

Villamanta's main concern

We have heard many reports of participants experiencing:

- stress
- anxiety
- harm
- loss of supports
- serious health impacts.

We believe some recent administrative changes have increased risks for participants.

The NDIS should be safe

Villamanta says the NDIS should balance:

- financial sustainability and,
- participant safety and human rights.

Both are important.

This includes managing costs and reducing fraud.

Risks to participants

We say the NDIA has focused strongly on financial risks.

But there has not been enough attention to the risks faced by participants.

We have seen:

- participants lose access to the Scheme
- more appeals
- incorrect participant records
- funding cuts for people with high support needs
- changes to payments and funding access.

Safety must be considered

Before major changes are made, the NDIA should consider:

- what could go wrong
- who may be affected
- how harm can be prevented.

Payment claims

The NDIA checks that claims are correct before paying providers.

Villamanta supports efforts to stop fraud.

However, some processes are creating problems for participants.

Sometimes a participant's payments are locked.

This can stop claims being paid.

Problems with payment locks

Participants report:

- not knowing why payments were stopped
- not knowing how to fix the problem
- long delays
- poor communication
- ongoing problems after issues have been resolved.

Participants may:

- lose support workers
- fall into debt
- stop using important supports
- experience stress and uncertainty.

Funding Periods

Funding periods divide funding into smaller amounts that are released over time.

The Government originally said funding periods would only be used in some situations.

Funding periods are now being applied much more broadly.

We say this is creating difficulties for many participants.

Public holidays can increase costs

Some people receive support every day.

Support costs are often higher on public holidays.

Monthly funding releases may not reflect these extra costs.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology includes items such as:

- wheelchairs
- communication devices
- specialised equipment.

Funding periods may delay a participant's ability to buy these items.

Planning and coordination supports

Some supports need more work at the start of a plan.

Funding periods can make this harder.

Appeals can become more difficult

Some participants are appealing NDIA decisions.

Funding periods can reduce access to funding while these appeals continue.

Measuring NDIA performance

The NDIA measures how well it performs.

We reviewed some of these measures.

The NDIA met targets for:

- overall Scheme growth
- payment processing
- reporting to government.

The NDIA did not meet targets for:

- participant satisfaction
- employment outcomes
- community participation
- progress toward goals.

Participant Service Guarantee

The **Participant Service Guarantee** sets time limits for NDIA actions.

Examples include:

- making decisions
- responding to requests
- reviewing plans.

The NDIA reported very poor performance against these timeframes.

Participants often report waiting much longer than expected.

Participant data

The NDIA collects information about participants.

This data helps measure performance and outcomes.

We say data may be affected by:

- privacy concerns
- misunderstandings
- recording errors
- lack of checking by participants.

Many participants do not see the information recorded about them.

This means they cannot correct mistakes.

Villamanta believes important data should be collected through independent and secure processes.

This would increase trust and accuracy.

Call centres

Many participants contact the NDIA call centre for help.

The call centre cannot always solve problems.

Sometimes staff can only pass information to another team.

The participant still has to wait for an answer.

Villamanta says a call should only be considered resolved if the participant's problem is actually solved.

Gender inequalities

We say the NDIA has recognised concerns about gender inequality in the NDIS.

We note that more women than men have left the NDIS over time.

We believe this difference should be investigated.

Better reporting is needed

Villamanta recommends reporting on:

- participant deaths
- participants leaving the Scheme
- trends across different groups
- risks affecting particular communities.

Incident reporting

The NDIA has systems for reporting serious incidents.

We question whether these systems always identify procedural problems within the Agency.

Incorrect participant records

We have reports of concerns about participant records.

Examples include:

- disabilities being removed
- disabilities being recorded incorrectly
- information being hidden from participants.

Incorrect records can lead to:

- incorrect advice
- incorrect decisions
- funding problems
- unnecessary appeals.

The need for advocacy is growing

Advocacy organisations help people understand and challenge decisions.

We say demand for advocacy is increasing.

Some disputes continue for many months.

Participants may need repeated follow-up before decisions are implemented.

Long delays can cause:

- stress
- uncertainty
- financial pressure
- health risks
- loss of confidence in the system.

More participants are appealing NDIA decisions than ever before.

Many advocacy organisations cannot meet demand.

As a result, some participants must manage appeals on their own.

What Villamanta wants

We want:

- stronger focus on participant safety
- better communication
- better record keeping
- faster problem resolution
- accurate reporting
- stronger safeguards when changes are introduced
- better management of risks to participants
- adequate advocacy support.

Final message

Villamanta agrees the NDIA must manage public money carefully.

However, financial sustainability should not come at the cost of participant safety and wellbeing.

The NDIA should measure success by looking at both:

- financial outcomes and,
- the real impact on people with disability.