



Queensland Advocacy Incorporated

Our mission is to promote, protect and defend, through advocacy, the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland.

Systems and Individual Advocacy for vulnerable People with Disability

4th March, 2020

Mr. Martin Hoffman NDIA CEO martin.hoffman@ndis.gov.au

Hon Anne Ruston, Minister for Families and Social Services senator.ruston@aph.gov.au

Hon Stuart Robert, Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme stuart.robert.mp@aph.gov.au

Hon Michelle Landry Assistant Minister Children and Families Michelle.Landry.MP@aph.gov.au

Hon Luke Howarth, Luke.Howarth.MP@aph.gov.au

David Moody, CEO NDS david.moody@nds.org.au

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Natalie Siegel-Brown, Public Guardian, natalie.siegel-brown@publicguardian.qld.gov.au

Dear Eminent and Very Important People,

I am writing to you with concerns for people with disability living in congregate care arrangements in light of the potential for transmission of COVID-19 "Coronavirus".

There appears to be a lack of concerted and cohesive policy for ensuring the health and safety and well-being of vulnerable people with disability who have heightened risk of contracting this disease due to the nature of their living conditions.

I note that the website for National Disability Services has information about protection of health and wellbeing of staff but no statement about ensuring protection for the health and wellbeing of the people for whom they provide supports and services. In fact the website also notes the following: "At this stage there is no formal advice from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) for providers relating to the coronavirus. We will monitor and when it becomes available, include this advice here."

I am deeply concerned that as ever, vulnerable people with disability are low on the agenda for government. Even the recent announcements for targeted economic stimulus puts business ahead of the needs of people with disability.

Our organisation is an independent community-based systems and individual advocacy organisation and a community legal service for people with disability. Our mission is to promote, protect and defend,

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QAI endorses the objectives, and promotes the principles, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Patron: His Excellency The Honorable Paul de Jersey AC

through systems and individual advocacy, the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland.

QAI's constitution holds that every person is unique and valuable and that diversity is intrinsic to community. As a Disabled Persons' Organisation, people with disability comprise the majority of our board and their lived experience of disability is our foundation and guide.

We request that urgent explicit directives and actions are publicly made to promote and protect the health and well-being of people with disability with particular regard to those who are supported by direct support providers. It is imperative that this is undertaken imminently for people living in congregate care arrangements where workers may come and go, and in some circumstances, where the premises may have multiple purposes. An example of this is a group home that was utilising a spare room as an informal respite service on an ad hoc basis.

Further to this we seek your urgent advice as to what procedures might be instigated if a number of people in shared care/living arrangements should become ill. Will they be sent to hospital? What measure will be implemented if people are confined to their homes? What protections will be implemented that do not in any way inhibit their rights to conduct their lives as other citizens in similar circumstances?

I look forward to your individual responses, so that I may convey them to other advocacy organisations across Queensland.

Yours sincerely,



Michelle O'Flynn

Director

