

OTA Statement Regarding the Proposed NDIS Independent Assessor Model

On Friday 28 August, the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Hon. Stuart Robert MP, issued a media release outlining reforms to the scheme. All of these reforms, with one significant exception, implement recommendations arising from a review of NDIS legislation conducted by Mr David Tune AO PSM in 2019. The other reform is the proposed rollout of Independent Assessments for those seeking to join the NDIS. This proposal has raised concerns among members of Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA).

Significantly, the Minister went into no detail about the Independent Assessments in his media release, merely announcing that they will be rolled out. This is most probably because the final shape of the model is still to be determined.

OTA has a representative on the working group, commissioned by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and led by Allied Health Professions Australia, which is developing the training module for the new Independent Assessor service.

OTA holds considerable concerns about aspects of the project, and were preparing to write to the CEO of the NDIA about these when the Minister issued his media release. Accordingly, that letter has now been addressed to the Minister and was sent this afternoon.

The correspondence addresses clinical considerations in some detail, as well as concerns about the future viability of those smaller occupational therapy practices which have been involved in NDIS assessment processes to date and may potentially lose work as a result of the proposed reforms. We specifically ask that any new arrangements not prejudice longstanding and hugely beneficial clinical relationships between highly experienced clinicians working in a small practice and often with very complex client needs.

We can also advise members that Friday's media release has aroused considerable concern among other allied health professions and consumer groups, particularly those working with people with a psychosocial disability. OTA is not fighting alone.

We will, of course, keep you informed upon receipt of a response from the Minister's office.