**Submission to SDA Pricing and Payments Framework Review**

My 29 year old daughter, Tara, has a very severe intellectual disability resulting in extreme functional impairment and very high support needs. She had been on the DSR for ten years and in my naivety, I genuinely believed that within 12-18 months of becoming a participant in the NDIS, she would have moved out of home into supported accommodation.

Instead, I am fighting an ongoing battle with the NDIA littered with frequent episodes of misinformation, mismanagement, ignorance and long periods of inaction.

Below is a brief history of this sorry saga:

20th September 2016 - First NDIS Plan - First Goal – To move out of home into fully supported shared accommodation with one or two other people.

All requested assessments obtained.

15th May 2017- Review sought to assess Tara’s eligibility for SDA.

2nd September 2017 – email from NDIS planner stating: **‘Tara is eligible for SDA’.**

3rd October 2017 – New Plan stating: **‘I am eligible for a fully accessible house or duplex specialist disability accommodation and would like this to be in the North Eastern Melbourne area.’** When I endeavoured to source SDA I was informed that the reference was in the wrong section of Tara’s plan.

15th December 2017 – Lodged a review request via email to have SDA reference in plan placed in the correct section. Received a review request response but no action.

24th January 2018 - Lodged another review request through NDIS planner to Complex Review Team given priority status. Received a review request response but no action.

16th February 2018 - Lodged a formal complaint to NDIA over the telephone.

9th March 2018 – Informed via telephone by NDIS Planner that the Complex Review Team requested Tara undergo additional assessments.

20th March 2018 – Lodged appeal with Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

10th April 2018 – Received a letter from NDIS Planner stating that Tara is not eligible for SDA as there is no evidence that Tara’s ‘full support’ needs could not be met in an ordinary house.

18th May 2018 – Case Conference at AAT where firm evidence was provided that Tara requires a modified home environment. NDIA moved the goal posts by declaring that ‘ordinary house’ means non-SDA house. NDIA stated that evidence had not been provided that Tara’s modified housing needs could not be sourced from the open market.

I have now gathered the evidence that suitably modified housing to meet Tara’s needs cannot be sourced from the open market and await the next Case Conference at the AAT on 26 June. It is expected that the matter will go to a hearing in August/September – a full two years after her first plan goal of moving out of home.

Tara is obviously eligible for SDA but the NDIA seem to be hell bent on denying Tara the services for which she is eligible. A quick look at the Housing Hub website shows multiple vacancies which are many months old, no doubt because of the reluctance of the NDIA to actually approve any new participants for SDA. As for how many have been approved for new builds … I’d love to see the stats.

It seems rather a pointless exercise to be encouraging developers to build SDA properties, when the NDIA make it so very difficult and time consuming to determine that participants, like my daughter, who are so clearly eligible for SDA, as officially eligible. To me, this is the number one issue to be resolved. The public money that has been wasted on the circus which is Tara’s case is an absolute disgrace, not to mention the time, stress and distress it has caused me.

Once Tara is finally assessed as eligible, the next hurdle will be to determine the housing design, type and location and therefore funding level. I have every confidence that this matter will result in another lengthy battle with the NDIA to have Tara’s preferred 2-3 bedroom new build approved. No double the NDIA will be wanting her to move into an existing 5 or 6 bed group home.

Here’s hoping this review has positive outcomes for participants with extreme functional impairment and/or very high support needs.

Yours faithfully



Linden Johnston