



9 August 2024

Minister Bill Shorten

NDIS & Government Services

By email: minister.shorten@dss.gov.au

Dear Minister,

A call for meaningful consultation on draft lists of NDIS Supports

Amaze works to build acceptance and understanding of autism. Informed by evidence, experts and lived experience, we influence policy change for Autistic people and provide independent, credible information and resources to individuals, families, professionals, government, and the wider community. We are closely connected with the community through our national Autism Connect helpline, peer support networks and capacity building initiatives.

We are writing to raise our concerns about the short consultation period provided for your draft lists of NDIS Supports. A period of two weeks (Sunday 4 August to Sunday 18 August) is clearly inadequate to achieve meaningful community consultation on this significant area of NDIS reform.

For policy decisions that impact Autistic people, meaningful consultation requires that: information is provided in an accessible format; the community has time and a genuine opportunity to participate and influence policy design and outcomes; a diversity of experiences and perspectives can be heard; and multiple accessible options for contributing are provided. Authentic consultation and a genuine opportunity for our community to engage will be vital to well-informed decision making and building trust and acceptability. The NDIS Supports lists are a significant element of NDIS reform as they will impact that scope of funding for participants and greatly impact their day to day lives. While these initial lists may only apply during the transitional period, they will clearly impact many lives in this period and inform the lists agreed going forward. This significant step in the reform process requires meaningful community engagement.

As an organisation representing the needs of Autistic people, and their families and carers, we require time to analyse the draft lists and provide informed feedback. We also need time to engage with our community (including hard to reach and vulnerable cohorts) to ensure they are aware of the consultation, have time and support to analyse and process what the lists mean for them and provide their feedback via an accessible mechanism. We are deeply concerned that the only way of engaging in this consultation is in writing. An accessible process, capable of reaching people with a diversity of lived experience should include multiple options for participation, such as via focus groups, interviews, webinars and targeted approaches to engage hard to reach and vulnerable groups. It is also unacceptable that the complex and long draft lists are yet to be available in an accessible format, such as Easy English, on the consultation webpage.

Please contact me by email at david.tonge@amaze.org.au or by phone on [03 9657 1600](tel:0396571600) if we can assist by providing information or answering any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

David Tonge

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