



The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

Subject: *government's war on autistic Australians*

I write to protest formally at the war on autistic Australians being waged by:

- Minister Robert, Minister for Government Services and the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- the Department of Social Security (DSS); and
- the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Perhaps you think our claim that these people are waging a war on autistic Australians is unreasonable. Following are a few of the facts that justify this claim.

- [DSS sought evidence](#) that autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is over-diagnosed. Despite findings that ASD is not over diagnosed or exaggerated, these people keep acting as if it is. They regard clinicians and the ASD community as dishonest.
- Despite the original advice from [the Productivity Commission](#) that “from an economic perspective, the benefits of the NDIS will exceed the costs” (under the heading “the cost of doing nothing”), these people keep saying the NDIS is “unsustainable” in relation to autistic NDIS participants. They especially regard autistic people as a problem because there are many more autistic NDIS participants than were expected originally. Still, the Government needs to make a much stronger case about NDIS unsustainability than they have so far at June 2020 (full NDIS roll-out) the average committed supports for an autistic NDIS participants was \$39,777 which is well below the average of \$84,132 for a non-autistic NDIS participant. Autistic NDIS participants average less than half committed supports of other NDIS participants, but the Government officials above still considers autistic NDIS participants “unsustainable”.
- NDIS policy development rejected advice that diagnoses of autistic people are increasing. Numerous sources of information, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics, showed that the number of ASD diagnoses are increasing in many parts of the world, including Australia. The NDIA's response is to

claim this makes the NDIS “unsustainable” and to exclude more autistic people who need support from the NDIS.

- The NDIS modelling estimated that autistic participants would be 20% of NDIS participants at full NDIS roll-out. It turned out that there over 31% of NDIS participants are autistic. The people listed above, rather than recognising their original model was wrong (which resulted in temporary intake shutdowns in SA and ACT), they expect to remove 1 in 3 autistic NDIS participants from the scheme and to get the numbers down to 20% of participants. The ABS observed there were 205,200 autistic Australians in 2018 and 68% had severe or profound disability. The number increased by 26% in the 3 years 2015-18. NDIA officials want autistic NDIS participants to be just 20% of the 460,000 NDIS participants, or 92,000. This means these people want at least 83,000 autistic Australians with severe or profound disability to be denied the NDIS by 2021.

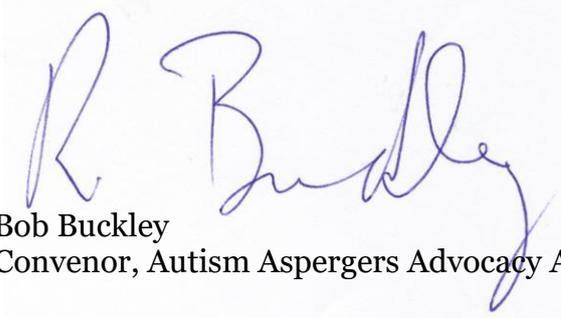
Note that at full roll out, the NDIS had 392,000 participants which is 14.7% short of the estimated number, so the NDIA is excluding even more people with disability than was planned.

- Like DSS’s Robodebt scheme, the NDIA’s newly announced function assessment scheme is discriminatory, cruel and illegal. Senior government officials believe that a high percentage of the most vulnerable Australians, especially autistic Australians, are actively rorting the NDIS. So, they created their NDIS functional assessments scheme contrary to the advice of the whole disability sector. They call it an “independent assessment” scheme, but it is not independent – such naming is a tactic direct from *Yes, Minister*. There is no possibility that this scheme will deliver the results they claim or address the issue that they completely misunderstand and misrepresent; their “assessments” are intended to exclude autistic people from the NDIS, to “assess” autistic people out of the NDIS. Any genuine attempt to address issues would have used co-design.
- The NDIS tried to exclude autistic people who need “substantial support” (Level 2 severity) from the NDIS, see <https://a4.org.au/node/1750>. Their claim that it was “an accident” is unbelievable. They broke [the Minister’s promise to consult over future changes](#) a week after it was made (see <https://a4.org.au/node/1762>).
- DSS is preparing a new *National Disability Strategy*. [Their Position Paper](#) mentions “outcomes areas” in Question 3 and “targeted action plans” in Question 7 but DSS officials told A4 that autistic Australians will not be an “outcomes area” or “targeted action area” no matter how bad the outcomes for autistic Australians are.
- DSS ensures that there are no advocacy services in the National Disability Advocacy Program that services autism related advocacy needs of autistic Australians, especially in relation to the NDIS (but also, health, education, employment and the legal system).

What steps will you take to cease the war these Government officials are waging on Autistic Australians?

Please note A4's unanswered questions policy. To keep it simple, this letter contains just one question.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Buckley', is positioned above the typed name and title.

Bob Buckley
Convenor, Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia.

9/10/2020