

27 March 2020



PO Box 6  
Lake Heights NSW 2502

Martin Hoffman CEO  
National Disability Insurance Agency  
GPO Box 700  
Canberra ACT 2601

cc: The Hon. Stuart Roberts MP  
Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme

The Hon Gareth Ward MP  
NSW Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services

Dear Mr Hoffman,

### **Request for extension to allowable claim period for canceled services**

The Illawarra Disability Alliance (IDA) is a group of Not for Profit disability specific providers working together collegially and collaboratively to deliver better outcomes for people with disability in the local community.

We are writing to you regarding how we manage the cancelation of day services due to the COVID-19 coronavirus.

Currently we have different types of short notice cancellations including:

- Participants/families providing us with short-notice cancellations with no end date due to COVID-19 concerns (stating they are not attending services until further notice for example) and/or
- Providers are having to cease providing day services as they are not able to meet the social (physical) distancing requirements due to the nature of the support and participants (we are cancelling services), and/or
- Social distancing, hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette is often difficult to manage in day services (creating an unacceptable risk) due to:
  - Insufficient PPE in day services where staff are required to attend to participant personal care needs for example.
  - The physical environment in which day services are delivered (size of premises/number of participants is now a major factor as we can no longer safely transport (or support) participants in the community.
  - The difficulty for many participants to understand and adhere to the new hygiene and social distancing requirements putting other participants and staff at risk.

- High levels of cancellations are affecting viability, potentially causing services to shut their doors and sack staff. Some services may be down as much as 60% and because this is no longer viable, the other 40% have to suffer. Flexibility is needed to match and maintain staff levels enabling providers to deliver services to those who need the support to continue.

The IDA also recognises that more people may be isolating in group homes and we believe that these costs should be recognised by a 20% increase in the value of service bookings for SIL consistent with the increases in other supports.

The Prime Minister has advised that the community (in general) “cannot go outside and participate in the community” - but this is what day service programs are all about.

Given that these situations are outside of the provider’s control, we propose that the NDIA allow providers to continue claiming cancelled day services until such time as the COVID19 restrictions are lifted. This will allow providers to negotiate with the workforce and restructure day service operations.

Yours sincerely,

Nicky Sloan

**CEO, Community Industry Group on behalf of the IDA members**

Members of the Illawarra Disability Alliance

	
	
	
	
	
	
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