

# New NDIS Quarterly Report Revives Call to Lift NDIA Staff Cap



The [NDIS Quarterly Report](#) for 1 April 2018 to 30 June 2018 was released on Monday, showing that 183,965 Australians were now benefitting from the NDIS, an increase of 13 per cent on last quarter.

While the NDIS is now fully operational in all regions of New South Wales, South Australia and Australian Capital Territory, the report noted that delivering on the speed of roll-out outlined in the bilateral agreements had been “challenging”.

[#NDIS](#) Quarterly Report: \$5.1 billion committed for participant support costs, 61,000 participants to date. State-by-State breakdown:

— NDIS (@NDIS) [9:51 AM - Feb 24, 2017](#)

Labor’s shadow minister for human services, Linda Burney, said NDIS rollout was continuing to fall behind and sat at just 69 per cent of transition targets – the equivalent of more 56,000 people missing out on the scheme.

She said these figures underlined the need for the federal government to lift the National Disability Insurance Agency staff cap.

“The government needs to listen to the advice of the Productivity Commission and follow Labor’s lead by lifting the arbitrary NDIA staff cap,” Burney said.

“Scrapping the staff cap will give the NDIA the flexibility to invest in training and deal with the delays, mistakes and frustrations, which too many people with disability, their carers and advocates have experienced.”

People With Disability Australia (PWDA) also [renewed their calls](#) to remove the NDIA staff cap in wake of the report.

But PWDA NDIS senior policy officer, Dr Meg Clement-Couzner, told Pro Bono News she also had concerns about the resolution of appeals through the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) – which reviews the decisions of the NDIA.

“The report showed AAT cases are taking quite some time, with 52 per cent yet to be resolved,” Clement-Couzner said.

“And that’s a concern for people who are waiting for decisions that will really have a big impact on their lives.”

Clement-Couzner noted the quarterly report no longer showed the outcome of AAT matters that did not proceed to hearing.

So while the [previous quarterly report](#) showed what percentage of AAT cases resolved before or at hearing confirmed the agency’s decision or not, the latest report only showed whether the matter confirmed the decision of the agency or not in the 25 cases that went to hearing.

This meant the outcome was unclear in the 460 AAT cases this quarter which were resolved before hearing.

“I think this really impacts on transparency from the agency,” Clement-Couzner said.

“It makes it a bit more difficult for us and other interested parties to tell what’s happening with those cases that don’t proceed to hearings.

“For the interest of transparency, I think it’s helpful if the agency shares the outcome of these cases.”

Pro Bono News requested clarification from the NDIA about why the quarterly report no longer showed the outcome of these AAT matters, but the agency did not provide a response.

Stats from [#NDIA](#) Quarterly Report: majority of [#AAT](#) appeals relate to planning, while 36% relate to accessing the [#NDIS](#). More details on appeal stats:

<https://www.facebook.com/PWD.Australia/posts/10155883842683657...>

— PWD Australia (PWDA) (@PWDAustralia) [5:06 PM - Aug 14, 2018](#)

Clement-Couzner said looking ahead to the next quarterly report, there were a number of focus areas which were important.

“I think definitely we need improvements in appeals, reviews and also the speed with which people are able to get independent reviews of decisions,” she said.

“We know the agency are making big efforts in the space of planning but of course that also remains a concern, and is demonstrated by the fact so many appeals (46 per cent) are about planning.

“And the other thing I think really needs to be addressed is access for people with disability who may have chronic illness or medical-related disabilities. That’s something we’re really seeing a lot of concern about in the disability community at the moment.”

Luke Michael is a journalist at Pro Bono News covering the social sector.