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# VALID

## VALID e-newsletter issue #35

VALID is deeply concerned that people with intellectual disabilities will be much worse off if the NDIA goes ahead with its plans for compulsory Independent Assessments. The information the NDIA has released so far tells us that there is a lack of evidence that Independent Assessments will produce the outcomes that NDIA wants, and that people will be put at serious risk if it fails.

We know that this approach has not been properly trialled with people with intellectual disabilities who have complex support needs. Also, that the assessment tools the NDIA has chosen are not likely to give information that is a true reflection of the wishes and needs of a person with intellectual disability. Experts tell us that people with intellectual disability typically need a sustained, multi-disciplinary approach to put together a reliable, ethical, evidence-based assessment of need. Unless the NDIA's proposed Independent Assessments have been proven effective for people with intellectual disability, they cannot go ahead in any way.

We know that Independent Assessments rely on interviewing the participant, as well as speaking with people who know the person well ('informants'). We don't know yet how the NDIA will decide whether a participant can accurately report their wishes and needs, how families will be involved, who the right informants should be, how conflicts of interest will be managed where services are the only available informant, the role of independent advocacy and supported decision-making and much more. These questions must be properly resolved before Independent Assessments are operating.

Inclusion Australia, with VALID's support, worked hard to show the NDIA that people with complex support needs had to have a different approach to

just one more initiative that hasn't been tested or endorsed by the participants who use the NDIS the most. We don't want one more parallel system – we want a system that works for everyone.

The NDIA must hold people with the most complex support needs at the heart of the design of any new initiative. This means co-designing with people with intellectual disabilities, their families and advocates – people with intellectual disability with communication support needs, people with behaviours of concern, people formerly institutionalised, and people who have no family or friends they can rely on. We are talking to the NDIA at every level, and working with Inclusion Australia and other advocacy organisations, to speak up about the problems with Independent Assessments. We will keep raising your questions too, and keep you updated about what we find out.

If you find our e-newsletter interesting you can [forward it to a friend](#) or they can [subscribe here](#). You can [unsubscribe](#) at any time. We hope you like it. Feel free to reply with any feedback.

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## COVID-19 Update

The VALID team has been working on making sure that people with a disability are properly supported throughout the pandemic. Our CEO, Kevin Stone AM, has been talking to the media, the NDIS and the State and Federal government in hope of creating a united response to COVID-19. You can watch Kevin's interview on the ABC news [here](#).

The Victorian government has since announced the creation of a joint taskforce to oversee the management of the COVID19 outbreaks in disability residential services. This joint taskforce will include both Victorian and Federal officials such as the NDIA and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

The Victorian government is also working with disability service providers to try and limit the movement of workers across different sites. For this to happen, they have created a fund to pay workers who miss out on work as a result of this change.

Some more positive news to come out recently in regards to the virus:

- High rise public housing tenants who are most vulnerable, will be offered private rental properties as part the Victorian Government's ongoing

- In Victoria and NSW, NDIS Participants don't have to use their NDIS package to pay for PPE and masks. Your provider can go directly to NDIA and charge them.

## Connecting the NDIS dots



At the start of COVID-19 the Families as Planning Partners team put their NDIS training online. Now that the course is running online, families are finding it easier to attend the training as they no longer have to spend time travelling. The course aims to empower participants and encourage person-centred approaches. The course is designed specifically to assist parents and families of people with disability to get ready for transitioning to the NDIS. One couple took part in the free online training and now feel like they can navigate the NDIS stress free. You can read the mother's letter [here](#).

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## What's on at VALID

[Families as Planning Partners Online NDIS Training](#)



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