23 April 2024

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and Government Services Bill Shorten is thanking Australians for providing critical tip offs to stop fraudsters and crooks ripping off people with disability.

There's been a radical increase in the number of fraud tip-offs to the National Disability Insurance Agency since the Albanese Government set up the Fraud Fusion Taskforce (FFT) in November 2022.

In the most recent quarter, the NDIA received 4,667 tip-offs related to fraud and compliance issues – an increase of more than 75 per cent on similar quarters prior to the establishment of the FFT. That trend has continued in 2024, with more than 2,000 tip-offs received in the month of February alone.

These tips off are leading to investigations and prosecutions. In recent weeks, two major prosecutions have highlighted the role all Australians can play in preventing fraud against the NDIS.

In one investigation, tip-offs led to two women being charged, with one pleading guilty and another being found guilty following a trial.

One of the women was last week (Friday 12 April) found guilty of falsifying reports and overcharging for services in a Sydney court. She could face years behind bars after a jury found her guilty on all 22 counts of fraud-related offences.

A tip-off led the NDIA’s fraud team to investigate the former healthcare practitioner, with 36 witnesses – including 20 NDIS participants – giving evidence in court during the trial.

Charges included dishonestly obtaining a financial advantage from the Commonwealth, with an alleged fraud value of more than $1 million.

The second investigation resulted in woman being jailed last month in Queensland for three-and-a-half years for her involvement in an attempt to defraud the NDIS.

The NDIA had investigated the QLD case after receiving complaints people had been claiming for services they never actually provided to an NDIS participant. The woman was among four people arrested and charged from the investigation, with all four pleading guilty to charges of General Dishonesty against the Commonwealth.

“These two cases have a couple of things in common. Significantly, they both started after people told authorities they suspected these crooks were taking advantage of NDIS

participants," Minister Shorten said.
'I'd like to thank Australians for supporting our efforts to rid the NDIS of fraudsters, scammers, rorters and criminals.

"This Government has made no secret of our focus on combating fraud against the NDIS and stamping out any dodgy operators. This increased focus has seen the number of tip-offs received by the NDIA skyrocket, and the Agency assesses every tip-off it receives.

"We also established the Fraud Fusion Taskforce and invested heavily in measures to further strengthen the integrity of the Scheme."

The Crack Down on Fraud program, announced in February and deployed by the NDIA, is now allowing detection of assessments and claims by dodgy providers. These cases are being taken seriously and will lead to a significant number of prosecutions.

Minister Shorten warned those seeking to exploit people with disability that they would be caught, and urged anyone who suspects the misuse of NDIS funding to continue contacting authorities. The FFT assesses every tip-off it receives.

"Since commencing in 2022, the Fraud Fusion Taskforce has investigated more than 100 cases with over $1 billion of NDIS funding," Minister Shorten said.

"For the NDIS to thrive, we need to ensure that every dollar of the NDIS is going towards supporting people with disability.

I want any would-be crook looking to prey on those who rely on NDIS funding to be caught and prosecuted."

Anyone with information about suspected fraud involving the NDIS should contact the NDIS fraud helpline on 1800 650 717, or email fraudreporting@ndis.gov.au.

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