**Goodbye from LaughLand Weighted Blankets as an NDIS provider and a business with an ABN**

It is with great sadness that I am informing you that LaughLand Weighted Blankets will be closing as a business this coming Friday 7 May. I chose to specialise in making customised weighted blankets for NDIS participants, but this is no longer a basis for a viable business. My business closing down is completely due to the way the NDIS treats weighted blankets. The NDIS insists that weighted blankets are high risk items and this makes it difficult for participants to get funding approved and difficult for me to get orders. Even when weighted blankets are treated as high risk and requests are accompanied by a therapist’s report and recommendation, they are being knocked back. This is making it impossible for participants to get approval under any circumstances and impossible for me to continue.

I will still sew weighted blankets as a hobby, which will be available through the LaughLand online shop on the Etsy website. However, I will voluntarily cancel my NDIS provider registration and ABN, so it will not be my main occupation and I will no longer be able to serve the NDIS market. I will be selling off my stock of lightly used trial weighted blankets through this Facebook page in the next few weeks.

I very much appreciate that I am in a privileged position, being able to cut my losses and walk away, when those of you who have a disability or who care about someone who has a disability don’t have this option. I hope that I can still assist you by sharing the knowledge and resources that I have accumulated over four years as an NDIS provider.

The NDIS position on weighted blankets is contrary to the findings of clinical research and the opinion of the vast majority of therapists and medical specialists. I believe it is actually unlawful because the NDIS is violating its own principles of individualised plans and own operational guidelines regarding assistive technology and risk levels. I would dearly love to challenge the NDIS so that every participant who needs a weighted blanket can get one, but I’m not in a financial position to do this. If I remain a registered provider, it’s also a conflict of interest.

Instead, I will publish short articles and discussions on this Facebook page and the LaughLand website about why I believe the NDIS is wrong, along with links to positive resources which demonstrate that weighted blankets are safe and effective for many people. In the past I have spend considerable effort assisting individual participants to get funding approval for their weighted blanket. While I can’t continue to assist you with initial requests for supports, I am more than happy to help you if your request is denied and you decide to take it further, either to an internal review of the decision or to a review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. In fact, I would be delighted to be of assistance in an AAT review.

Finally, thank you so much to my customers and supporters who have made it possible for me to work for myself for the past five years, doing something that is important to me. I have met some lovely people through email and phone conversations and in person. I have learnt a great deal about sensory differences and the impact they can have on a person’s life, about how the NDIS operates, about using technology, and about sewing techniques. I have personally sewn more than 1100 weighted blankets and countless lap pads and wraps (I haven’t been counting them). Thank you. Thank you again.

Anne Fraser