



Australian Government  
Department of Social Services

# Improving the National Disability Insurance Scheme

Making the NDIS work better for you

An Easy Read guide



## How to use this guide



The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) wrote this guide. When you see the word 'we', it means DSS.



We wrote this guide in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Not bold  
**Bold**

We have written some words in **bold**. This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean. There is a list of these words on page 36.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of a report. This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find more information on **our website**.



You can ask for help to read this guide. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

## What's in this guide?

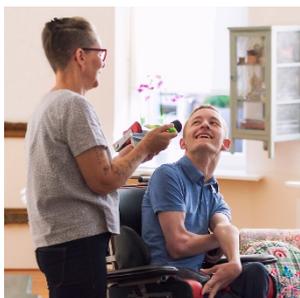
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## What is this guide about?



The National Disability Insurance Scheme supports people with disability in Australia.

We usually call it the NDIS.



The NDIS provides funding for supports and services that help people with disability in their day-to-day lives.



The National Disability Insurance Agency manages the NDIS.

We usually call them the NDIA.



At the moment, the NDIS helps over 412,000 people with disability get the services they need.



We want the NDIS to work better for:

- **participants** – people with disability who take part in the NDIS
- their families
- their carers.



This means we need to change how the NDIS works.



But we won't make all of these changes at the same time.



We will make the NDIS:

- simpler
- fairer
- **consistent** – done the same way every time.

On the following pages we talk about how we will change the NDIS.



We are telling you how the NDIS will change now so you know what we plan to do.



We also want to find out what you think about how the NDIS will change.

## Why do we want to change the NDIS?

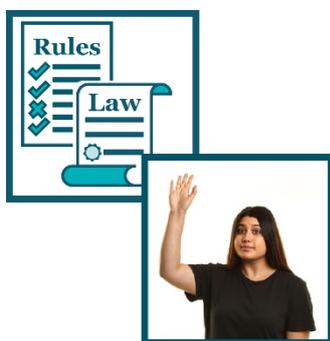


In 2019 an expert named Mr Tune **reviewed** how well the NDIS is working.



When you review something, you check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



Mr Tune:

- looked at the law and rules for the NDIS
- listened to what people told us about the NDIS.



He wrote a report to explain what he found.

We call this report the Tune Review.



The Tune Review included **recommendations**.



Recommendations are ideas about how to fix a problem.

Mr Tune said we should:



- change the current NDIS rules to make using the NDIS easier



- create a Participant Service Guarantee that outlines how the NDIS should work



- use free independent assessments.

We explain what independent assessments are on page 20.

He also said we should make it easier for participants to:



- understand their plan



- make decisions



- use their funding.



You can find Easy Read information about the Tune Review and what the Government said about it on the **DSS website**.

## The NDIS Participant Service Guarantee



Mr Tune said the NDIA needs to make sure people with disability who take part in the NDIS have a good experience.



Mr Tune also said the law should list the standards the NDIA has to meet.



For example, the law should say how long the NDIA can take to tell someone if they can take part in the NDIS.



The Participant Service Guarantee is a new document that outlines the standards the NDIA has to meet.

We usually call it the Guarantee.



A **guarantee** is like a promise.



The Guarantee will be made into law.



This means that the NDIA must follow the rules in it.

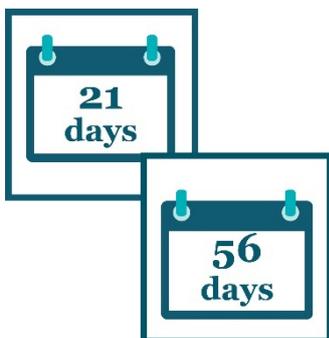


The Guarantee will help make sure everyone has a good experience with the NDIS.



The Guarantee will say:

- how long the NDIA can take to make decisions
- how the NDIA must work with participants.



For example, the NDIA must:

- decide if you can take part in the NDIS within 21 days
- approve your plan within 56 days.

## What will the Guarantee do?



The Guarantee will make the NDIS better for you.

The NDIS will be:



- transparent – the NDIA will make it easier to understand their information and decisions



- responsive – when you contact the NDIA they will try to help you quickly



- respectful – the NDIA will treat you as an individual



- empowering – the NDIA will give you information to help you live your life how you want to live it



- connected – the NDIA will help you find the supports and services you need.

## When will the Guarantee be made into law?



We want to make the Guarantee into law by 1 July 2021.

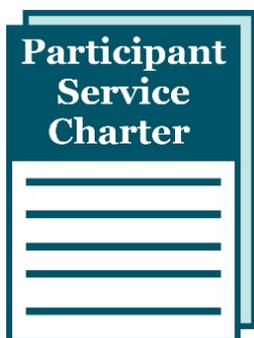


But the NDIA is already working to make the NDIS better for people with disability.



The NDIA wrote 2 documents to explain:

- what they will do
- how they have already started to make changes.



The **Participant Service Charter** talks about how the NDIA will work with and support participants.



It explains how the NDIA will follow the Guarantee before it is made into law.



The **Participant Service Improvement Plan** talks about how the NDIA will make their services better over the next 2 years.



You can find Easy Read versions of these documents on the **NDIS website**.

## What are independent assessments?



The NDIA needs information to work out:

- how your disability affects your life
- what supports you need from the NDIS.



This information helps the NDIA work out what to put in your **NDIS plan**.



An NDIS plan is a document that includes information about:

- you and your goals
- what supports you need
- the **NDIS funding** you will receive.



NDIS funding is the money from your plan that pays for the supports and services you need.



The NDIA needs this information when you:

- apply to take part in the NDIS
- need to change your plan.



At the moment, people with disability need to:

- get this information from their healthcare professional, such as a doctor or therapist
- give this information to the NDIA.



Getting this information can:

- take a lot of time
- cost a lot of money.



Not everyone can get the information they need.



And healthcare professionals often collect information in different ways.



Mr Tune told us that we need a more consistent way to collect this information.



Mr Tune also said that everyone should have the same opportunity to provide information.



Mr Tune said we should use free independent assessments to solve this problem.



**Assessments** help the NDIA work out:

- how your disability affects your life
- what supports you need from the NDIS.

An assessment is **independent** when it is done by someone who:



- doesn't already know you
- isn't the healthcare professional you usually see.

We talk about independent assessments in more detail on the following pages.



The NDIA will share more information about independent assessments in the coming months.



You can find more Easy Read information on the independent assessments page of the **NDIS website**.

## How will independent assessments work?



The NDIA will use independent assessments from the middle of 2021.



Independent assessments are for when you:

- apply to take part in the NDIS
- review your plan.



Independent assessments will be free.



Independent assessments will think about the whole person, not just their disability.



They will help the NDIA focus on what you can do by looking at your functional capacity.



Your functional capacity is:

- your ability to do something
- the skills you have
- how you manage everyday life.



This means your plan will focus on what supports you need.

## Who will do independent assessments?



The NDIA will choose a group of people who can do independent assessments.

We call them **independent assessors**.

Independent assessors:



- don't work for the NDIA



- understand what people with disability need



- do your independent assessment with you.



Independent assessors will all be qualified healthcare professionals.



Independent assessors will give the NDIA most of the information they need to make their decisions.



But the NDIA will still use the information your doctor or healthcare professional gives them when you apply.

## Independent assessment tools



All independent assessors will use the same documents to do independent assessments.



We call them **independent assessment tools**.

In this guide, we just call them tools.



These tools have been used around the world for many years.

These tools will make sure independent assessments are:



- fair



- done the same way every time.

These tools will also make sure independent assessments think about:



- each person's capacity



- the support each person already has at home.





The NDIA tested these tools in a **pilot**.



A pilot is a test run to work out what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



The NDIA will also run a second pilot.



You can find out more about these pilots on the independent assessments page of the **NDIS website**.

## How will NDIS funding change?

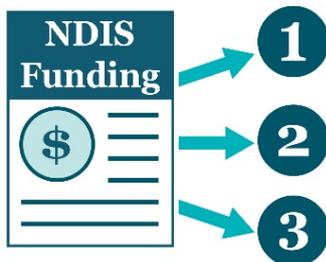


Once the NDIA starts using independent assessments, they will use them to decide how much NDIS funding you receive.



We talk about how NDIS funding will change in more detail on the following pages.

### Making NDIS funding more flexible



At the moment NDIS funding is split into many different categories.



This can make it difficult to use your funding.



We will take away most of these categories so participants can spend their funding on the supports they need.



This will make NDIS funding more **flexible**.



When funding is flexible, it means you can use it in different ways.



Some categories will still be in some participants' plans.



This will happen if it's important to spend that funding on a certain type of support.

This could include:



- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) – accessible housing for people with disability
- assistive technology – funding for expensive equipment to get around and communicate
- home modifications – funding to pay for changes you need to make your home easy for you to live in.



If these supports are in your plan, you can only use the funding in that category to pay for those supports.



You can use the rest of the funding in your plan on other supports you need.

## What you shouldn't spend your NDIS funding on



You should only use your NDIS funding to pay for supports and services related to your disability.

You shouldn't spend your NDIS funding on:



- supports or services you can already get in your community, such as health and education services



- day-to-day living expenses, such as groceries or bills



- supports or services that aren't related to your disability



- supports or services that don't follow the law



- supports or services that might hurt you or hurt someone else.

You also shouldn't spend your NDIS funding on:



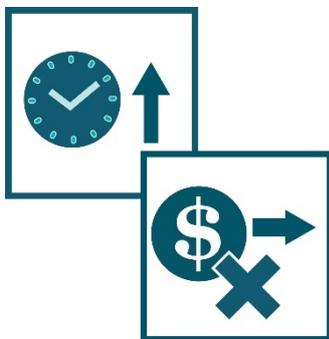
- a sex worker – someone you pay to have sex with you
- sexual devices – something you can use to give you sexual pleasure.

### More ways to pay for your services



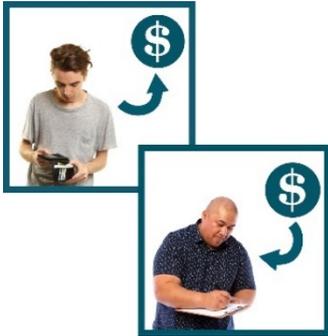
Participants and service providers know and use the system we have now – myplace.

But using this system can:



- take a lot of time
- mean payments can take a while to go through.

We want to find more ways for participants and **service providers** to:



- pay for supports and services
- claim supports and services.

A service provider supports people with disability.



A service provider can be an:

- organisation
- individual.



For example, we are improving myplace so it works better.



We are also working on a new phone app that you can use instead of myplace.



And we want the NDIA to be able to pay service providers directly.



This means participants and service providers can spend less time managing payments.

## Early intervention for young children



We want to improve **early intervention** for young children.



Early intervention is when people get services and support:

- as early as possible in their lives
- when they first get a disability.



**Early Childhood  
Early Intervention**

We sometimes call this Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI).



We want to use ways that work best to support children and their families.



We also want to include more help and support for children who:

- don't take part in the NDIS
- stop using the NDIS.



We want to make sure children get the right support at the right time in their lives.



The NDIA has already started talking to the community about the early intervention program.

So far, they have learned that:



- children and families need more support early on, including being able to take part in the NDIS



- not all children and families get the right support



- not many children leave the NDIS to use other supports in the community.



The NDIA have ideas about how to make early intervention work better for:

- children
- families.



They have started to look at making ECEI better. We call this the ECEI Implementation Reset Project.



You can find more information about the ECEI Implementation Project on the **NDIS website**.

## We want to know what you think



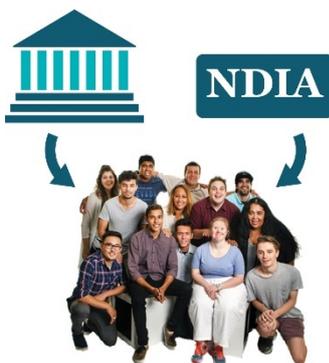
We still have work to do before we change the NDIS.



We are writing papers that talk in more detail about how the NDIS will change.



But before we publish these, we want to find out what the community thinks.



The Government and the NDIA will talk to the community about each of these important topics.



The Government and the NDIA will:

- start now
- continue until early 2021.



You can find more information about how you can have your say about independent assessments on the **NDIS website**.



You can find more information about how you can have your say about how NDIS funding will change on the **NDIS website**.



You can find more information about how you can have your say about the changes to early intervention on the **NDIS website**.



We will also share the Guarantee in early 2021.



We want to know what the community thinks before we make the Guarantee law.



In early 2021 you can find more information about how you can have your say about the new law and the Guarantee on the **DSS Engage website**.

## Contact the NDIA



Phone

**1800 800 110**



TTY

**1800 555 677**



Speak and listen

**1800 555 727**



[enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au)



[www.ndis.gov.au/contact](http://www.ndis.gov.au/contact)

## Word list



### Assessments

Assessments help the NDIA work out:

- how your disability affects your life
- what supports you need from the NDIS.



### Consistent

When something is consistent, it is done the same way every time.



### Early intervention

Early intervention is when people get services and support:

- as early as possible in their lives
- when they first get a disability.



### Flexible

When funding is flexible, it means you can use it in different ways.



### Guarantee

A guarantee is like a promise.

## Independent

An assessment is independent when it is done by someone who:



- doesn't already know you
- isn't the healthcare professional you usually see.



## Independent assessors

The NDIA will choose a group of people who can do independent assessments.

We call them independent assessors.



## NDIS funding

NDIS funding is the money from your plan that pays for the supports and services you need.



## NDIS plan

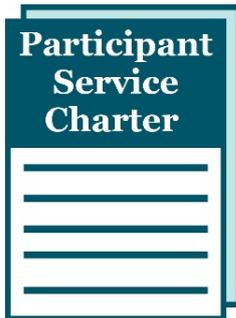
An NDIS plan is a document that includes information about:

- you and your goals
- what supports you need
- the NDIS funding you will receive.



## Participants

Participants are people with disability who take part in the NDIS.



## Participant Service Charter

The Participant Service Charter is a document that talks about how the NDIA will work with and support participants.



## Participant Service Improvement Plan

The Participant Service Improvement Plan is a document that talks about how the NDIA will make their services better over the next 2 years.



## Pilot

A pilot is a test run to work out what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



## Recommendations

Recommendations are ideas about how to fix a problem.



## Review

When you review something, you check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



## Service provider

A service provider supports people with disability.

A service provider can be an:

- organisation
- individual.



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