

Demystifying the NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides funding to eligible people with disability in Australia. First established in 2013, the Scheme is designed to support people with disability to achieve greater independence through access to supports, services, jobs and volunteering opportunities.

The NDIS is Australia's first national Scheme for people with disability and was set up as a world first approach to disability support. An insurance-based scheme, it provides funding directly to individuals with disability living in Australia. While there are an estimated 4.3 million Australians with a disability, today the NDIS supports just over 500,000 people. Not everyone with a disability is eligible for NDIS funding.

To be eligible for NDIS funding you must be aged under 65; be an Australian citizen, permanent visa holder or a Protected Special Category Visa holder; live in Australia; have a disability caused by a permanent impairment; and need disability specific supports either in order to complete the activities of day to day living, or to reduce your future need for supports.

To become an NDIS Participant – or someone who receives funding from the Scheme – you need to apply either in writing by completing an Access Request form or over the phone. The NDIS will then consider the application including supporting documentation before making an 'Access Decision'.

Anyone who is determined as eligible for NDIS funding will receive an 'NDIS Plan' and undergo regular planning meetings or plan 'reassessments'.

An NDIS plan outlines the goals a participant wants to achieve and the supports they require in order to achieve the goals. The plan outlines the amount of funding that is available to them and how to use and manage their NDIS funding.

The funding that is provided by the NDIS to a participant can only be spent on the supports set out in their plan. However, most supports are described by the NDIS as 'flexible', which means an NDIS participant has choice and control over which providers they choose to deliver those supports. In some instances, supports are

described as 'fixed'. In this case, only the supports stated in the plan can be purchased with that funding.

Many providers now deliver supports to NDIS participants. Some supports, however, can only be delivered by 'NDIS Registered Providers'. As registered providers, these organisations meet strict conditions for the quality and safety of their services. An organisation must be registered in order to deliver specialist behaviour supports; any supports that involve restrictive practices; plan management' and specialist disability accommodation.

NDIS Participants receive their funding in three different support budgets. These are Core Supports; Capacity Building Supports; and Capital Supports.

- **Core supports** – funding that helps with every day activities and current disability related needs.
- **Capacity building supports** – supports that help build independence and skills
- **Capital Supports** – typically one off, higher cost items such as assistive technology and home modifications.

An NDIS participant may be funded in their Core budget to receive 'Assistance with Social and Community Participation'. In this instance, they may receive funding for a support worker to assist them to take part in social and community activities. An NDIS participant looking to volunteer may require their support person to accompany them to their volunteering location. In this instance, the support person is funded by the NDIS and paid for by the NDIS participant, or by their Plan Manager. It should be noted that if a support person is provided by a participant, they are not an additional volunteer, they are there to provide the participant with the supports they need to achieve their role.

An NDIS participant may also receive funding in their Capacity Building budget known as 'Finding and Keeping a Job'. This funding is often provided for Participants who are working towards open employment. Funding under the 'Workplace Assistance' category, for example, can be used to pay for assistance that enables a

working age NDIS participant to explore what work could mean for them; build essential skills for work; or develop a career plan. Someone wanting to explore open employment through a volunteer position may ask to use this budget to pay for any supports they may need to secure the volunteer position.

It should be noted that, in line with the NDIS' the core principles of 'Choice and Control', it is down to an NDIS participant how they choose to spend their NDIS funding.

Detailed pricing arrangements and price limits are available and updated annually to support participants and support providers in understanding how price controls for supports and services work in the NDIS. These can be downloaded [from the NDIS website](#).

More Information

Visit the [NDIS website](#) for more information or contact [People with Disability Australia](#).