



Supporting Patients with a Psychosocial Disability to apply for the NDIS

NDIA Community Engagement NSW and ACT

2 June 2022

What is the NDIS?

Reasonable and necessary supports



Help people achieve goals

A lifetime approach



Information and referrals

500,000 Australians



The role of the NDIA

To be able to build and manage a world leading NDIS, the NDIA has six core responsibilities:

1. Delivering the NDIS and supporting the independence and social and economic participation of people with disability
2. Building community awareness of disability
3. Ensuring the scheme's financial sustainability
4. Collecting, analysing and exchanging data
5. Developing and enhancing the disability sector
6. Undertaking disability and supports research

The legislation and Agency's responsible

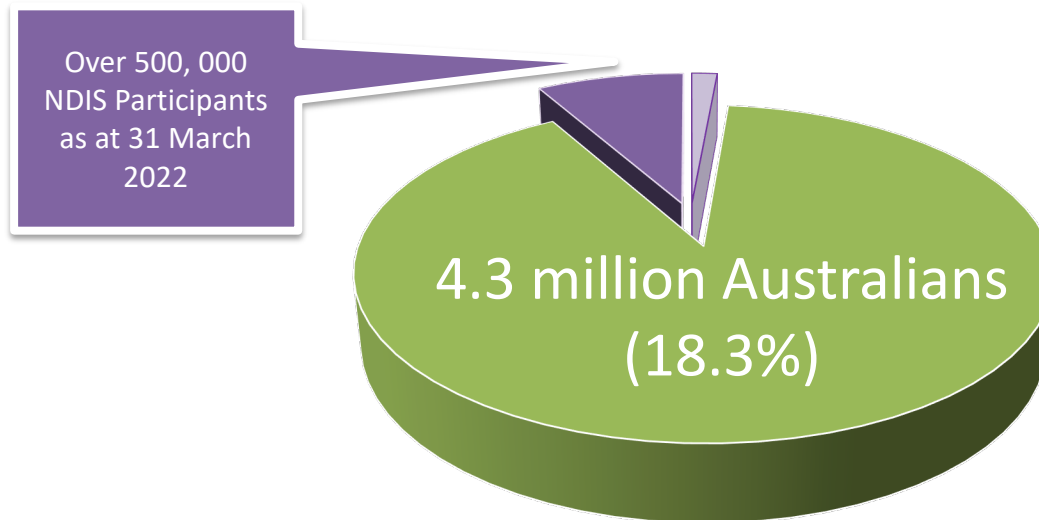
- **National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013**
- **The National Disability Insurance Scheme Rules 2018 (The NDIS Rules)**
- The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
- The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (the NDIS Commission)

Local community & government services

A key principle of the NDIS is that people with a disability have the same rights as all Australians to access community and mainstream services, to determine their best interests, and exercise choice and control in decisions that affect their lives. The NDIS is not designed to duplicate or replace existing mainstream services or community supports.

- **Community and informal supports** are 'unpaid supports' including family, friends and community groups e.g., church. The NDIS aims to sustain and strengthen these existing supports, not to replace them. This is considered in detail when developing a participant's individual NDIS plan.
- **Mainstream services are government-funded public services** that are available to all Australians. These include health services (e.g., Medicare, dental, hospital, mental health) employment services (e.g., Centrelink), housing and more.

Australians with a Disability



At 31 March 2022, 518,668 participants were receiving NDIS support with 19,556 new participants joining the NDIS last quarter (a 3% increase).

- 4.3 Million Australians identify as having a disability.
- 78.5% of these people reported a condition not likely to meet the NDIS Access requirements.
- The NDIS is for people aged under 65 who have a **lifelong disability** that has a **significant impact** on their **everyday life**.
- The NDIS is a capacity building scheme which helps people to build their skills, independence and participation at work and in the community.

Hunter New England

- 2,389 participants with a primary disability of psychosocial disability accessing NDIS Supports in Hunter New England LGA (as at 31 December 2021)
- Average funded supports in plans for this cohort is \$91,000
- DATA Source: [Explore data | NDIS](#) – www.data.ndis.gov.au

Eligibility to join the NDIS

To meet the NDIS Eligibility Requirements:

Age: a person must be under the age of 65 when their request to access the NDIS is made.

Residency: a person must be an Australian citizen, holder of a permanent visa or a protected special category visa.

Disability: a person is likely to meet the disability requirements if they have a disability that is attributable to an impairment, that is permanent or likely to be permanent, and that results in substantially reduced functional capacity.

If this criteria is met, an Access Request needs to be made.

Engaging with the people you support about NDIS

- It is important that GP's and other treating health professionals understand what the NDIS is and what it can provide for people, particularly for people who are experiencing a psychosocial disability and harder to engage with.
- Many of the people you support will have limited knowledge about what the NDIS does and what it can provide. This creates barriers to them initiating an application.

NDIS and Consent

To access and apply for the NDIS we must have consent of the person, over the age of 18.

It is also important to acknowledge that people you support can sometimes have a mistrust of government services or may find the process too difficult or lack insight into their own disability or support needs.

You may also find that people you support have limited knowledge about what the NDIS does and what it can provide. This creates barriers to them initiating an application.

Some people will also not identify with the language the NDIS uses and do not identify as having a disability. As psychosocial supports are a later edition to the disability sector, the language of labelling a mental illness as a disability may also be new, confusing and confronting to some clients who have worked with external services in a recovery framework.

If a person wants to provides consent for the NDIS to give information to others, or for other people to do things on their behalf, we need them to give us consent. We accept both written and verbal consent and there are consent forms you can use available on our website: [Consent forms | NDIS](#)

Access Request

- If a person meets initial eligibility criteria, an Access Request needs to be made.
- This can be done by either:
- Calling the NDIS on 1800 800 110; or
- Downloading the Access Request Form from the NDIS website
- For children aged under 7, their parent can contact the NDIS directly or their local Early Childhood (EC) Partner.

Search on the NDIS website:
Access Request Form

ndis

Access Request Form

Complete this form to apply for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

How to complete this form:

- You (the applicant) should complete Section 1.
- Your Treating Professional should complete Section 2.
- Please attach evidence of age, residence (including citizenship or visa status), and disability with this application form. We need this information to make a decision about your application.

Note for children under 7 years: The NDIS has engaged Early Childhood Partners around Australia to support children under 7 years. We encourage you to consider this pathway and contact your Early Childhood Partner before you complete this form. Please visit our website or call us for their contact details.

How to contact us

Do you need help to understand this form?

Do you need help to fill out this form?

Do you have more questions or need information about the NDIS?

You can contact us by:

Phone:	1800 800 110
Speak and Listen:	1800 555 727
Teletypewriter (TTY):	1800 555 677
Email:	NAT@ndis.gov.au
Internet Relay:	Visit relayservice.gov.au and ask for 1800 800 110
Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS):	Call TIS National on 131 450 and ask for the NDIA on 1800 800 110 once an interpreter is available

How to return your completed form and evidence to us:

- Email: NAT@ndis.gov.au
- Mail: GPO Box 700, Canberra, ACT 2601
- In person: Take it to your local NDIA office.

Access request form (ARF)

- The access request form is split into 2 sections:
- Section 1: Completed by applicant or their representative
- Name, date of birth and address
- Contact details
- Information about the disability and whether it's linked to compensation
- Section 2: Completed by the treating health professional
- Identify any disabilities or impairments
- What treatment/interventions have been completed
- Request any previous assessments
- Information about their functional impact

Evidence of Psychosocial disability form

Evidence of psychosocial disability form

NDIS applicant's name: _____
 Date of birth: _____
 NDIS reference number (if known): _____

Section A To be completed by the applicant's psychiatrist, GP, or the most appropriate clinician.

Section A completed by: _____
 Qualifications: _____
 Organisation/Practice: _____
 Contact number: _____

1 Presence of a mental health condition

I have treated the applicant since _____
 I can confirm that they have a mental health condition.
 Yes No

Diagnosis (Or, if no specific diagnosis has been obtained, please briefly describe the mental health condition.)	Year diagnosed

Has the applicant ever been hospitalised as a result of the condition(s) above?
 Yes No
 Hospital discharge summary attached

Or, if hospital discharge summary is not available, please list hospitalisations in the following table.

History of hospitalisation	
Dates of admission	Hospital name

Developed by the Transition Support Project, in conjunction with the NDIA, with funding from the Department of Social Services, September 2019.

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- Assists in supporting a clinician to provide evidence of disability
- Includes information around explaining their diagnosis, the impairment, life skills profile, etc.
- To be used in addition to standard access request form

Disability requirements



If you make an NDIS Access Request you must provide evidence to the NDIA which demonstrates:

- You have a lifelong disability, **and**
- You are unable to complete everyday tasks (in at least one life domain), as a result of your disability, without support from a person or specialised individual equipment, **and**
- Your disability impacts your social and work participation
- You require lifetime disability support which is most appropriately provided by the NDIS

Understanding the clinical criteria

Clinical recovery is when a person's symptoms are remedied and/or there is significant functional improvements as a result of treatments.

If there are available treatments likely to result in clinical recovery, the person is unlikely to meet the likely permanent criteria.

Personal recovery refers to an individual's journey toward living a productive and satisfying life, whilst living with the impacts of mental health conditions.

If there are available treatments that will support a person's personal recovery, but not their clinical recovery, they are likely to meet the likely permanent criteria.

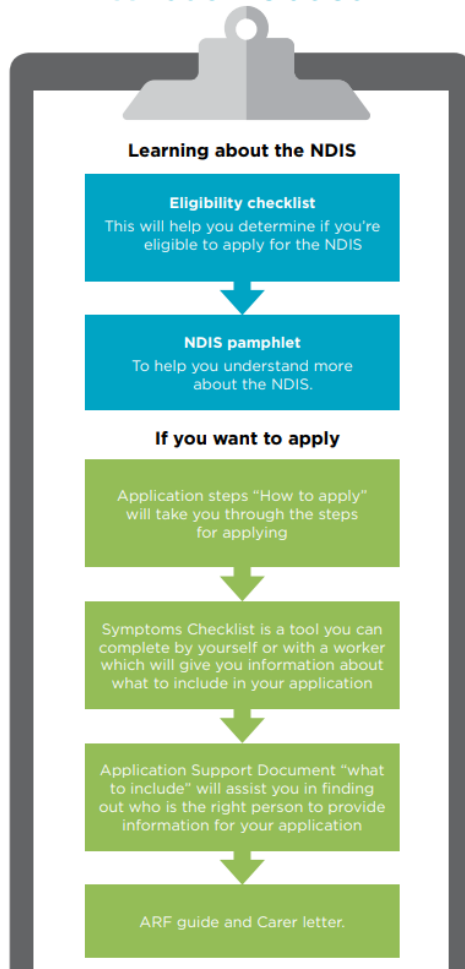
Reduced functional capacity

- A treating health professional must provide evidence that shows reduced functional capacity in one or more of the following areas:
 - Mobility (e.g. moving around the community)
 - Communication (e.g. speech impairment)
 - Social interaction (e.g. friends and behaviour)
 - Learning (e.g. remembering information and learning new skills)
 - Self-care (e.g. hygiene and grooming)
 - Self-management (e.g. decision making skills and managing money)

information pack

What's included?

THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED BY THE
INSURANCE SCHEME (A
AND CAPACITY B)



GUIDE + TEMPLATE

Guide to preparing a support worker letter

Support worker letters can be included as part of the evidence provided when requesting access to the NDIS. This is an opportunity for the support worker to summarise their observations on how mental health conditions impact the life of a person that they have been working with, and to provide more information or clarity to the evidence provided with the access request.

Why are support worker letters important?

One of the main benefits of [well written support worker letters](#) is that they provide a snapshot of the evidence that has been gathered and are a cover letter for the application. When read alongside the completed Evidence of psychosocial disability [form](#) they can help an access assessor clearly see how mental health conditions impact a person's life. They also let the assessor know what to expect from the application, what information has been gathered, who provided the information and any gaps or inconsistencies that need to be clarified.

What information could be included?

- Your role, how long you have been working with the person and what type of support you provide
- A list of other supports the person accesses in mainstream and community health systems
- A description of informal supports (family, friends, others) and how they support the person, particularly noting where this support is essential for daily living (e.g., person would face substantial difficulty without the support)
- A description of the way that the person's mental health condition impacts their everyday life focusing on the NDIS life domains affected

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Treating health professionals

We generally prefer evidence that comes from a treating professional who:

- is the most appropriately qualified person to provide evidence of your primary disability
- has treated you for a significant period of time (at least six months) [is registered to practise in Australia or New Zealand](#)
- provides disability evidence (such as a medical report) that is original, genuine and specific to you.
- Depending on your situation, you might get your evidence of permanent impairment from a different treating professional than your evidence of functional capacity.

You can visit [Types of disability evidence](#) to help you decide on the most appropriate treating professional for your primary disability. If you need help to get your evidence together, your [local area coordinator](#) can help you.

How do we weigh evidence of disability?



- We understand that you may have evidence of your disability from different health professionals at different times.
- When we're deciding if you're eligible for the NDIS, we look at:
 - how old your evidence is
 - who provided your evidence.
- We weigh evidence based on what we consider 'best practice', or highest quality. We consider this evidence most strongly when we make a decision.

How old should your evidence be?



How old should your evidence be to confirm your permanent impairment?

- We need evidence from your doctor or specialist to confirm your permanent impairment.
- You can give us evidence confirming this from any age. However, evidence about how your impairment impacts your functional capacity should be from the last 12 months.

How old should your evidence be to confirm your functional capacity?

- Generally, we need evidence about how your impairment impacts your functional capacity from the last 12 months.
- This is because your functional capacity may change over time – even if your impairment does not. It's important that we have evidence of your current circumstances to ensure we understand your support needs.
- If you give us more than one type of evidence, we might weigh the newer evidence over the older evidence. If you give us older evidence, we will generally give this less weighting when we make our decision.
- In these cases, we will generally ask for more information. If this is not provided, we may decide you are not eligible for the NDIS.

Prioritising prospective participants with urgent circumstances



- In urgent circumstances, the NDIA may determine whether a prospective participant meets the access criteria sooner than the timeframe set out in the NDIS Act.
- Urgent circumstances include, but are not limited to:
 - where a prospective participant's accommodation or care arrangements have broken down
 - are unsustainable, fragile, at risk of breakdown
 - or where a prospective participant is at risk of harm or is re-entering a community setting and has few or no supports in place.

[Access to the NDIS Operational Guideline - General matters relating to access requests | NDIS](#)

How to submit a request for urgent access decision



Once the ARF is completed and has the necessary supporting documentation then it can be sent to the National Access Team (NAT) NAT@ndis.gov.au using the template below.

Include in Subject line: Priority – Urgent decision required <person’s first and last name>

- Include in body of email reasons why an urgent access decision is required. For example, there is an imminent risk of the person;
- Losing accommodation or becoming homeless
- Breakdown in caring arrangements due to informal supports having serious illness/injury/death, unexpected deterioration in functional capacity
- Rapid deterioration in presentation of disability
- Immediate risk to self, others or community
- In addition where a person doesn’t have disability specific supports in place and are progressing to release from a long term stay in prison, discharge from hospital or mental health facility, or a newly acquired disability such as a spinal cord injury.

Once submitted to NAT under priority access, the assessment will be completed within 48 hours.

What happens if a person is not eligible?



- If a person is deemed not eligible, they can't become an NDIS participant.
- The NDIA will try and contact the person by phone, or their preferred contact method, to explain why they are not eligible. We will give reasons for our decision, and also answer any questions someone might have.
- We'll also send a letter with our decision, including the reasons someone is not eligible and what to do next. The letter will confirm the date we made the decision.
- Even if you're not eligible for the NDIS, we can help you connect with an [early childhood partner](#) or [local area coordinator](#) . They can help you access other services.
- For example, you might be able to access medical, mental health, disability, or community supports in your state or territory.
- We also have a list of [other government and community supports](#) you can get, even if you're not eligible for the NDIS.

Resources and information to help support your GP and treating health professionals Navigate the NDIS Access Process



- The dedicated NDIS webpage includes:
 - Extensive set of FAQ's – Applying to access NDIS, Eligibility and Medical conditions FAQ, Supporting Evidence FAQ, Supports FAQ
 - Practical scenarios
 - Video libraries
 - Patient resources
 - Access forms and factsheets

Search on the NDIS website:
GPs and health professionals




Practical Resources to Support people with a psychosocial disability and harder to engage with to access the NDIS




- [TSP for all](#) developed by Flinders University as part of the Psychosocial Transition Project. They have some really great resources on their website.
- [Project Embark](#) - ICLA Embark supports people with a mental illness who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness to access the NDIS. We do this through two streams – Embark Access and Embark Upskill.
- [NDIS Guidelines for Homelessness Services- Vincent Care](#)
- [Mental Health and the NDIS](#)
- [Practice guidelines for specialist homelessness services \(shss\) regarding their interface with the national disability insurance scheme](#) (Homelessness NSW)

More information



For more information, please contact:

-  1800 800 110
-  www.ndis.gov.au
-  community.engagement.east@ndis.gov.au

For people with need help with English:

-  TTY: 1800 555 677

For people with hearing or speech loss:

-  TTY: 1800 555 677
-  Speak and Listen: 1800 555 727

