26 November 2024

Please note the advice regarding Art and Music Therapy has now changed. Read the September 2025 update.

Update at September 10 2025

Duckett review confirms art and music therapy to continue

Art and music therapies will continue to be available to people with disability under the National Disability Insurance Scheme where there is evidence it will provide beneficial outcomes.

The Independent Review of Art and Music Therapies led by leading health economist Dr Stephen Duckett AM confirmed that they could be effective and beneficial in the right circumstances.

Read the full Art and Music Therapy update.

Original article below

The National Disability Insurance Scheme exists to ensure participants can access the evidence-based disability-related support they need.

The Government has released definitions of NDIS supports, as part of legislation changes to make it clear what NDIS participants can and cannot use their funding for.

The Government undertook community consultation on the legislation prior to its passage in parliament and implementation on October 3.

In line with the legislation the Agency is updating its guidance to participants. A new Operational Guideline relating to therapy supports will be released on 2 December that clarifies:

- NDIS participants will continue to have access to music and art therapy.
- From 1 February 2025 how participants access music and art therapy will change.
- Participants will be able to access these supports through two different ways through their community participation budget:
    - At a 1 to 1 rate of $67.56 an hour when delivered by a registered provider.
    - At a group rate of $193.99 an hour when delivered to a minimum of 4 participants by a registered provider. This will support participants to have greater opportunities

for inclusion and participation in the community.

Participants and providers can continue with current arrangements until 1 February when the changes to the price guide come into effect.

Participants who have art or music therapy stated in their plan, because it is reasonable and necessary and based on evidence in their specific circumstances, can continue to access supports at the higher rate.

While art and music therapy remain permissible, they do not meet the evidentiary standards required to be classified as a ‘therapy’ under the definition of NDIS supports.

The allowable NDIS list includes ‘evidence-based therapy to help participants improve or maintain their functional capacity in areas such as language and communication, personal care, mobility and movement, interpersonal interactions, functioning (including psychosocial functioning) and community living. This includes an assessment by health professionals for support planning and review as required’. Therapy (for example psychology or occupational therapy) is paid at a higher rate than many other activities funded through the NDIS.

We understand that the evidence base in relation to art and music therapy is continuing to be developed, as it relates to disability-related support. In recognition of this the NDIA is referring art and music therapy to be assessed by the NDIS Evidence Advisory Committee (NDIS EAC).

The NDIS EAC was a key recommendation of the NDIS Review. Its role is to provide advice on the evidence base for therapeutic supports accessed through the NDIS, improving outcomes and ensuring better value for participants.

More information on NDIS supports can be found at What does NDIS fund?