17 December 2024

The NDIA welcomes the Australian Government's investment to support further reform of the NDIS to ensure the world leading Scheme delivers better outcomes for NDIS participants.

The Government has announced:

- $280 million in funding for the NDIA to develop a more consistent approach to understanding participants' needs for NDIS supports
- $4.527 million over 2 years for the Agency to design a new early childhood pathway to better support children younger than 9 years old.

Both these measures were recommended by the NDIS Review and are supported by recent legislative changes.

It is important to note that for NDIS participants, there is no immediate change for them, their families and carers.

The Agency is working with the disability community on changes to the Scheme and remains deeply committed that any changes will be developed in partnership with people with disability, including children and their families.

The Agency has started to co-design planning and pathway reforms with the disability community.

This has included direct consultations and seeking feedback from Disability Representative and Carers Organisation and the Independent Advisory Council about the new support needs assessment approach.

$280 million in funding to develop a more consistent approach to determining NDIS supports

A key recommendation of the NDIS Review was the need for a clear and fair way to understand participants' needs for NDIS supports.

This includes a strengths-based assessment which focuses on a participant's support needs rather than functional capacity.

The Review identified a good understanding of support as a bedrock of a fair and sustainable NDIS.

The $280 million will build and prepare a dedicated, 1000-person strong trained workforce to understand participants' support needs in the future.

This means the Government will pay for assessments, not people with disability.

The Agency will continue to work with participants, staff and the disability community to develop this new approach. Benefits for participants will include:

- no longer needing to source their own reports and provide evidence that they need a range of supports, which imposes costs and time burdens
- more equitable and fair budgets, reflecting individual support needs
- increased flexibility - greater choice and control to determine their preferred support arrangements.

The NDIA is preparing to release an approach to market to identify relevant available tools to understand the needs of participants for NDIS supports. This will take place in the first half of 2025.

The Agency will continue to work with the disability community to design and implement assessment and budgeting reforms, including future workforce requirements, that support participants and improve their experience with the Scheme.

$4.527 million over 2 years for the design of a new early childhood pathway within the NDIS to better support children younger than 9 years old

The NDIA will also work with children and families with lived experience, experts, and the disability community to design an improved approach to providing supports for children younger than 9.

The design will include:

- best practice early childhood approaches
- early intervention packages to support children with disability and developmental delay and their families
- the development of a ‘lead practitioner’ model recommended by the NDIS Review.

The pathway will reflect best-practice early childhood intervention to help children reach their goals and improve life-long outcomes.

The NDIA is committed to delivering a pathway with high-quality, evidence-based supports that improves outcomes for children and their families.

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