10 September 2025

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.

The Duckett Review made 19 recommendations relating to art and music supports for NDIS participants, of which 15 are directed to the National Disability Insurance Agency. The NDIA supports all the recommendations directed to it.

The review's key recommendations include:

- Art and music therapies should be delivered by a qualified therapist who is registered with a recognised professional association.
- A new national price limit of $156.16 per hour for Art and Music Therapy, in line with the maximum payment rate for counselling.
- Making a clearer distinction between art and music as a therapeutic support, and art and music as a non-therapeutic support.
- NDIS funding cannot directly be used to cover the cost of art and music activities, however funding can be used for supports to enable participation in art or music activities, just not the cost of the activity itself.
- The NDIS Evidence Advisory Committee should assess the evidence base of music and art therapy interventions for specific groups of people in its 2025-26 work plan.
- That the NDIS Evidence Advisory Committee develop a process for making decisions where there is a poorly developed evidence base.

The Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits (PAPL) Guide will be updated to reflect the new pricing for art and music therapies, which will take effect from 24 November 2025.

In the meantime, participants can keep accessing the supports outlined in their plans.

The Evidence Advisory Committee has been set-up to provide evidence-based decisions about whether supports are effective or not, and whether they should be available through the NDIS.

The Evidence Advisory Committee will act on Dr Duckett's recommendations by early 2026.

For more information, including the full report and Agency response, visit the data and research website .

Quotes attributable to Senator Jenny McAllister, Minister for the NDIS:

“I want to thank Dr Duckett for his work which provides a clear way forward for both NDIS participants and for providers of art and music therapy.

“Eligible participants who access art and music therapy can be confident that they are being supported by qualified therapists, recognised by a professional association.

“We’re also making sure that the price of therapies is in line with the cost of other government services, so people with disability aren’t paying a higher price than other Australians.”

Quotes attributable to Dr Stephen Duckett:

“The NDIS is one of Australia’s most important social policy innovations. It was therefore a privilege for me to be invited to undertake the review of art and music therapy. It is clear that art and music therapies can be effective, and event life changing, for some people with disability.

“This finding arose out of reading the research, with the research findings given life by reading and listening to the deeply personal stories we heard from people with disability and their families and therapists.

“I looked at pricing as well and found the current hourly price limit for art and music therapies under the NDIS is too high and has been putting pressure on the therapy market outside the NDIS.

“My recommendation is that $156.16 per hour is more appropriate, in line with the rate for counselling, as these are all developing professions that are not yet nationally regulated.

“There also needs to be a much clearer distinction between art and music as a therapeutic support, and art and music as a non-therapeutic support.

“Where an artist or musician does not have the relevant qualifications to register with one of the professional therapy associations, they should not be charging the therapy price limit.”

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