

Welcome to the latest update on the NDIS rollout.

The year is drawing to an end, but we continue to be busy at the NDIA with a number of important activities and improvements occurring in the last month, alongside a focus on what we need to achieve in 2019.

NDIS Quarterly Report (1 July to 30 September 2018)

On 17 November, the [Council of Australian Governments NDIS Quarterly Report for quarter one of 2018-2019](#) was released.

The report shows that the Scheme is continuing to grow strongly and steadily. As of 30 September 2018, 208,793 Australians were receiving disability supports through the NDIS, which is a 14 per cent increase from the last quarter. Of those, around 70,000 participants are receiving disability supports for the first time in their lives under the NDIS. Participants now have more choice than ever before. 17,925 providers have registered to deliver NDIS supports nationwide, representing a seven per cent growth from the previous quarter.

While the report shows recent improvements to the NDIS have positively impacted the participant experience, we acknowledge challenges remain. The NDIA and our Partners are continuously learning from experiences to deliver improvements that will make a real difference to the lives of the participants through our series of improvements to the NDIS pathway.

Participant outcomes

For the first time, the quarterly report included data from a new longitudinal study of participants who have received NDIS support for the last two years.

The data indicated improved outcomes for participants who spend more time in the Scheme. Key findings include:

- 91 per cent of parents and carers of pre-school age participants thought the NDIS had helped increase their child's ability to communicate their needs, compared to 87 per cent in their first year;
- 69 per cent of parents and carers of school-age participants up to 14 years felt their child had become more independent as a result of the NDIS in their second year of participation, compared to 54 per cent in their first year;
- 63 per cent of participants aged 15-24 said the NDIS had helped them with daily living activities in their second year of participation, compared to 61 per cent in their first year;

- 75 per cent of participants aged 25 and over believed the NDIS had helped them to exercise more choice and control over their lives during their second year of participation, compared to 71 per cent in their first year; and
- The proportion of participants aged 25 years and over involved in community and social activities had increased from 36 per cent when they entered the Scheme to 46 per cent after spending two years in the Scheme.

This new data demonstrates that the NDIS is opening up new possibilities for participants, and is assisting them to achieve their goals.

The Quarterly Report also includes [new information on Specialist Disability Accommodation](#) to assist participants and providers better understand this growing market.

What are we working on?

Assistive Technology

The NDIA recognises the transformative power of appropriate Assistive Technologies and seeks to ensure participants have access to individualised AT solutions that enhance their economic and community participation.

We are aware the experience during trial and early transition have identified areas of AT implementation and delivery that require improvement. This aligns with feedback provided by the sector and our participants.

The Agency also acknowledges that more needs to be done to improve the timeliness and quality of decision making about AT.

The Agency is committed to delivering a better AT experience through a number of activities, including:

- improvements to the planning process including timely repairs and replacements and reducing the need for quotes;
- a central team to address any delays in AT plan approval and implementation; and
- a new approach to improve the process and timeframes for more complex AT assessments which will draw on the experience of specialised assessors who will work with participants during the pre-planning stage of the Pathway.

I encourage you to read the [Agency's submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS Inquiry into Assistive Technology \(external\)](#) which provides more detail on what we are doing to improve the AT experience for participants.

Recent highlights

Independent Assessment Pilot

On 7 November, the NDIA announced the launch of the [Independent Assessment Pilot](#). This pilot has been developed to better understand and assess the functional impact of disability for people with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability and psychosocial disability.

Participants and their families have told us that they want the NDIS to be more consistent and equitable. As part of our continuous improvements to the participant pathway and in response to this feedback, we have been looking at how we can improve the consistency and reliability of access and planning decisions, to assist in delivering both high quality and appropriate supports for participants.

The pilot will be held in selected areas of New South Wales, is voluntary, and for people aged seven and over. Assessments are free of charge and will help inform a participant's access decision or the supports included in their plan.

Pilot participants will also have the chance to provide feedback about the experience and shape future improvements to the NDIS access and planning process.

New participant plan

On 5 November the Agency released a new NDIS participant plan format. The new plan format is part of our program of pathways improvements.

The new plan has been developed in collaboration with current participants, who told us that they wanted a plan format that was easier to read, understand and implement.

The development process for the new plan included four consultative workshops with participants, including with the NDIA's Participant Reference Group.

There are several key changes between the current and new format that will improve the participant's experience with the Scheme. These include:

- A clearer layout and clearer definition of funded supports;
- Stronger alignment of mainstream, community, informal and NDIS funded supports to each participant goal;
- A more user-friendly overall design;
- Clearer information on where to get help, including an NDIS primary point of contact; and
- Language that is easier to understand when describing funded support categories.

I want to thank the participants, carers, families and providers involved in helping us design this new plan format for their time and insights. These changes will allow us to continue improving each participant's experience and outcomes.

Participant Employment Taskforce

On 19 November 2018 the Government also announced a new [NDIS Participant Employment Taskforce](#). The aim of the taskforce is to:

- better understand and address barriers to employment throughout a participant's life,
- prioritise employment in planning and plan reviews, and
- ensure there is clarity about the supports available through Disability Employment Services (DES) and the NDIS for young people

A key part of this project will involve working alongside people with disability, employers and the sector to hear about what works, and where the challenges are. The NDIA is committed to working closely with the sector on this project.

I will keep you regularly updated on the work of the Taskforce through these updates.

100,000 people in NSW now accessing life-changing NDIS supports

On 21 November Federal Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher, together with the New South Wales Minister for Disability Services, Ray Williams, announced the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has reached a major milestone with 100,000 people in NSW now receiving support through the Scheme.

The NDIS was launched in 2013 at four trial sites across Australia, including NSW's Hunter Region. Since then the Agency has welcomed 100,000 people into the Scheme in NSW, including more than 31,000 people who have never received disability support from government before.

Market Enablement Framework

On 23 November 2018, the Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services announced the release of the [NDIS Market Enablement Framework](#). The Market Enablement Framework outlines how the NDIA will fulfil its role as a market steward as the disability services market undergoes reform.

The new framework guides how the NDIA will monitor the market and determine what, if any, strategies should be adopted to encourage market growth or correction. A key principle is that the NDIA will not always intervene in the market, instead focusing on enabling the market to develop and only intervening where participants are unable to access necessary supports.

We are currently working on a number of projects that complement the Market Enablement Framework to make sure it is actioned efficiently and effectively, including local area monitoring that identifies local areas of potential undersupply of disability supports, enabling the NDIA to consider local responses.

2017-18 Annual Report

The 2017-18 Annual Report has been released and is available on the [Annual Reports page](#).

This is NDIA's fifth report, which covers our progress from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, and records our results against targets set in the [Portfolio Budget Statements \(external\)](#) and the [2017-21 Corporate Plan](#).

The report acknowledges the huge amount of work undertaken by the NDIA and its Partners in the Community in 2017-18, including the achievements, challenges and future priorities for the NDIS.

I will provide more detail on what we have achieved together this year and what 2019 hold in my December end of year message.

As always, I would like to thank you for your ongoing collaboration and support of the NDIS.

Rob.

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