



THE HON DAN TEHAN MP
Minister for Social Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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Improved experience for NDIS participants and providers

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will deliver a better experience to participants thanks to improvements that will be rolled out from October.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) workforce improvements include:

- An additional 750 staff will be hired over the next 12 months and targeted training of 6,000 planners and frontline staff will take place to support the reform implementation;
- The NDIA's staffing cap will be increased to 3,138 in 2018-19 and 3,230 in 2019-20, with a further increase in 2021-21, bringing the new, ongoing cap to 3,400;
- The Government will introduce amendments to the NDIS Act that would allow the NDIS to increase the number of staff who can make access decisions and approve plans.

NDIS participants will have new, face-to-face planning meetings that deliver easier to understand, accessible plans, supported by a consistent, single point of contact.

Significant improvements are occurring to ensure information is clear and easy to understand to assist people with disability, their families and carers navigate the NDIS.

The reforms are being introduced after a successful trial with 1,000 participants. The NDIA has listened to feedback, with a focus on getting the planning experience right.

Improvements to the participant experience will also include:

- Clear links to other service systems to make sure that people get the supports they need from other services like the housing, education, employment and health systems;
- Stronger connections between NDIA planners and Local Area Coordinators (LACs), who will become a consistent point of contact for the participant;
- NDIA planners and LACs will undertake improved disability awareness and cultural competency training;
- Face-to-face planning support will be offered to participants to assist during the critical pre-planning and plan implementation stages;
- Implementation of a complex support needs pathway to assist participants with complex support needs and improve their access to services;
- A nationally consistent Early Childhood Early Intervention approach will provide best practice intervention strategies;
- A new stream to support people with hearing impairment and ensure timely access to early intervention for hearing impaired children;
- Ongoing work with Mental Health Australia to implement a psychosocial disability service stream to better address the needs of participants with psychosocial disability;
- The participant and provider portals and NDIS website will be updated.

In addition, the NDIA will continue to work with the Autism Advisory Group on how the NDIS can support enhanced outcomes for participants with autism.

Reforms also include improvements for providers to promote an innovative market of supports and services. Improvements for providers include:

- Implementation of the first set of Independent Pricing Review recommendations that provide immediate support for providers from 1 July 2018;
- Enhancements to the Provider Finder tool so providers can more easily connect with participants;
- A dedicated National Provider Payments Team will be expanded to continue working with providers to resolve payment issues;
- Improvements to the quoting and claiming processes for low-cost Assistive Technology;
- Regular engagement with providers to build the NDIA's understanding of business needs and increase awareness about the NDIS.

Disability Advocacy Network Australia CEO Mary Mallett said people with disability, their families and advocates expected the new NDIS participant pathway to quickly improve the on-the-ground experience people have with the Scheme.

“As the pilot is designed, people will be able to contact the NDIS, find out if they are eligible and be assisted to develop their NDIS plan, in a seamless way. We are very pleased that the NDIA has listened to people, understood what their concerns were and worked hard to develop a better process for peoples’ interaction with this new scheme,” Ms Mallett said.

For more information on the NDIS pathway visit <https://www.ndis.gov.au/pathways-experience>.

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