



THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME AND MENTAL HEALTH

INTRODUCING THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

This information has been prepared to explain the new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). It has been produced by the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA), in partnership with the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF)

The MHCA is an independent, not-for-profit organisation committed to achieving better mental health for all Australians, while the NMHCCF is the combined national voice for mental health consumers and carers.

This is one of several NDIS resources we have produced for mental health consumers, their families and carers. Others include:

- The National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health: Am I eligible for support?
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health: Achieving your goals
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health: What services can I choose?

See our resources online at www.mhca.org.au

THE NDIS AIMS TO DELIVER BETTER SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

WHAT IS THE NDIS?

The NDIS is the new national system aimed at providing better support to Australians with a disability.

It is administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), is government-funded and provides all its services for free. The scheme offers exciting new opportunities for people who are eligible for NDIS services.

The NDIS covers people with a psychosocial disability associated with a mental illness. This disability is sometimes referred to as a psychiatric disability.

The NDIS is very new, having started in 2013. It is being trialled at a few launch sites during 2013 and 2014. It will then be rolled out across Australia.

HOW MUCH SUPPORT IS PROVIDED BY THE NDIS?

The NDIS provides support at different levels. These levels are called 'tiers'.

- **Tier 1** - building community awareness of disability issues
- **Tier 2** - basic information and referral advice for people with a disability, their families and carers
- **Tier 3** - development and funding of a **personal support plan** for people with a disability.

Tier 3 is the highest level of support and is the level of most interest to many people with a disability.



AM I ELIGIBLE FOR SUPPORT?

Not everyone with a psychosocial disability will be eligible for the highest level of NDIS support. To qualify for this support you must be under the age of 65 when you apply for support, be living in Australia, and be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident or hold a Special Category Visa.

You must also have a particular type of disability (see the resource called *Am I eligible?* for more details on this). Your disability must be significant and likely to be permanent. It must have a big impact on your day-to-day life and your ability to participate in your community. It must mean you usually need support from other people to join in activities or do things at home or in the community. You must be likely to need supports for the rest of your life.

DOES MY DISABILITY HAVE TO BE PERMANENT?

Yes.

But permanent doesn't mean that it has to always be the same. A person's permanent disability may have intense stages and other times when it is not intense.

DOES MY DISABILITY HAVE TO BE HAVING A BIG IMPACT ON MY LIFE?

Usually yes.

But in some cases NDIS support may be available even if your disability is not having a huge impact on your life right now. If provision of support now will prevent your disability from getting much worse in the future, you may still get help now from the NDIS if it is regarded as 'early intervention'.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR SUPPORT?

The NDIS is not yet fully operational, so check first to see if it is running in your area. If it is, and you think you may be eligible for support, contact your nearest NDIA office. Someone from the office will interview you to see if you are eligible for a personal support plan.

WHAT IS A PERSONAL SUPPORT PLAN?

This is a plan you will develop with staff from the NDIA to help you achieve your goals. It will include different forms of support specially designed for you and funded by the NDIS. The supports may come from one or more service providers.

Your personal support plan is built around you and your needs. Before you go to discuss your personal support plan with NDIA staff, it is worth thinking about your goals and needs, and how you could be supported to meet them.

WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORTS CAN BE PROVIDED UNDER A PERSONAL SUPPORT PLAN?

A personal support plan can include a range of different services and supports. The NDIS does not replace the health system, so you will still get your health services from the same places as before and these costs will still be covered by the health system. But the new scheme *can* cover all sorts of assistance that people may need to help with daily living, to live independently and to engage with the community. Here are some examples:

- Planning and decision-making (e.g. a social worker to help you plan how to set up your own home)
- Help with household tasks (e.g. help with cooking meals or cleaning or whatever else you might need to help you live independently)
- Support building social relationships (e.g. help finding and participating in a film club or going to a concert)
- Financial management (e.g. help from a financial counsellor so that you can manage your money better)
- Tenancy management (e.g. an advocate to help you manage a dispute with your landlord)
- Recreation (e.g. transport to and from a sporting event)
- Making medical appointments, transport to and from appointments, and support with medical decision-making.

YOUR PERSONAL
SUPPORT PLAN
IS BUILT AROUND
YOU AND YOUR
NEEDS



THE NDIS
RECOGNISES
THAT MANY
PEOPLE WITH A
PSYCHOSOCIAL
DISABILITY RECEIVE
UNPAID CARE

DOES THE NDIS INVOLVE FAMILIES AND/OR CARERS?

Of course.

The NDIS recognises that many people with a psychosocial disability receive unpaid care from family members or others. If people want their carers – whether they are family members or not – to be involved in the development of a personal care plan, then NDIA staff will make sure this happens.

The NDIS cannot pay carers directly for their work. But it can pay for training that would help carers, or for respite care so that carers can take a break.

The NDIS tries to give each person with a disability as much control as possible over his or her personal care plan. In some cases a person may have difficulty making important decisions, even with support. In these cases the NDIA may appoint a *nominee* to assist you make decisions and manage the plan. The nominee may be a family member or carer or some other person known to you. If a guardian has already been appointed for a person with a disability, that guardian will usually be the nominee.

MORE HELP?

If you would like more information on the NDIS you could contact:

- **The Mental Health Council of Australia** – phone 02 62853100 or visit www.mhca.org.au
- **The National Disability Insurance Agency** – phone 1800 800 110 or visit www.ndis.gov.au
- **Carers Australia** – phone 02 61229900 or visit www.carersaustralia.com.au
- **National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum** – phone 02 62853100 or email nmhccf@mhca.org.au

ABOUT THE MHCA

The Mental Health Council of Australia is the peak, national non-government organisation representing and promoting the interests of the Australian mental health sector. We're committed to achieving better mental health for all Australians.

The MHCA aims to promote mentally healthy communities, educate Australians on mental health issues, conduct research into mental health issues and reform Australia's mental health system.

ABOUT THE NMHCCF

The National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum is the combined national voice for consumers and carers participating in the development of mental health policy and sector development in Australia.

Through its membership, the NMHCCF gives mental health consumers and carers the opportunity to meet, form partnerships and be involved in the development and implementation of mental health reform.

