**NDIS Sector Update – May 2024**

Hi all,

As part of our focus on safeguarding the integrity of the NDIS, we are supporting participants to have access to high-quality, safe supports delivered by providers who are ethical, honest, and compliant with Australian laws.

The NDIA is working alongside the disability community and across government to ensure every dollar allocated to our participants reaches them.

NDIS Support Coordinators and Plan Managers play a significant role supporting participants to spend their plan appropriately and enable participants to use their supports in the most efficient and effective manner.

While most Support Coordinators and Plan Managers do the right thing, we know some do not.

We have written to all Support Coordinators and Plan Managers to remind them of their responsibilities and obligations. More information is provided below, at Safeguarding the integrity of the NDIS.

In March the Australian Government introduced proposed legislative changes to the NDIS Act into Parliament. The proposed legislation is the Government’s first step, post the NDIS Review, to put in place the scaffolding needed to start making the NDIS stronger and to improve outcomes for NDIS participants.

More information about the proposed legislative changes is included in Minister Shorten’s media release, found below, and is available on the [Department of Social Services website](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dss.gov.au%2Fdisability-and-carers-programs-services%2Fndis-reforms&data=05%7C02%7CPhillip.Wakefield%40ndis.gov.au%7C399466ca09d14c9330a608dc4e0208e0%7Ccd778b65752d454a87cfb9990fe58993%7C0%7C0%7C638471018339854021%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=GdF%2FGeJ2BPNtZa%2F4WbDkTnod1MHViY%2Fku5UCKA0S0qg%3D&reserved=0).

In other news, Minister Shorten recently announced the release of the [NDIS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy 2024 – 2028 (the Strategy) and Action Plan](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndis.gov.au%2Fnews%2F10054-cultural-and-linguistic-diversity-cald-strategy-and-action-plan-2024-2028-released&data=05%7C02%7CPhillip.Wakefield%40ndis.gov.au%7C91eedec03b4346766e6b08dc68bae21d%7Ccd778b65752d454a87cfb9990fe58993%7C0%7C0%7C638500399474852012%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=1rhzQHope16XZ3cCHPo02Kdnb9xFMs6VvSUdqiBpMbA%3D&reserved=0).

This work is part of our plan to strengthen the NDIS to better support people from all cultural and language backgrounds. The CALD Strategy and Action Plan have 6 key priorities and 28 actions to:

* support CALD communities to better access and use the NDIS
* improve NDIS plans to reflect the needs of CALD participants.

We co-designed the CALD Strategy and Action Plan with more than 800 people from CALD communities including participants, families and carers. We’ve also translated these resources in 17 languages, including Auslan. We will continue to work closely with the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) and an External Advisory Group (EAG) who represent 32 disability organisations from CALD communities to make sure we are meeting the needs of CALD communities – now, and into the future.

We will publish regular reports to track our progress.

Aaron

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## Media releases from the Minister

* [**Getting the NDIS back on track**](https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/9975-getting-ndis-back-track)
* [**CALD community co-design new NDIS CALD Strategy**](https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/10053-cald-community-co-design-new-ndis-cald-strategy)
* [**Participant Employment Strategy 2024-2026**](https://ndis.gov.au/news/9965-refreshed-strategy-support-more-ndis-participants-work)
* [**Decorated cop to oversee NDIS watchdog**](https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/9929-decorated-cop-oversee-ndis-watchdog)
* [**Fair Price Taskforce to protect participants from being overcharged**](https://ministers.dss.gov.au/media-releases/14236)
* [**Tip-offs helping to catch NDIS fraudsters**](https://ndis.gov.au/news/10043-tip-offs-helping-catch-ndis-fraudsters)
* [**New multi-million dollar technology protecting the NDIS**](https://ministers.dss.gov.au/media-releases/14806)

## News from the NDIA

**Safeguarding the integrity of the NDIS**

We have written to all Support Coordinators and Plan Managers to remind them of their responsibilities and obligations.

The NDIS letter tells them they must:

* meet their record keeping, conflict-of-interest, and Commonwealth obligations, and
* not engage in practices which facilitate NDIS funds misuse.

We want participants to receive the best support possible and that every dollar we have goes towards delivering services that make a difference.

If you have concerns about the practices of other NDIS providers (including Plan Managers, health professionals or Support Coordinators) or participants we encourage you to:

* complete a [NDIA Fraud Reporting Form | NDIS](https://www.ndis.gov.au/form/ndia-fraud-reporting-form), or
* make a complaint to the [NDIS Commission](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/making-complaint).

### **NDIS Reform for Outcomes co-design update**

Over the last quarter, co-design working groups have focused on shorter term initiatives that the NDIA can implement ahead of the Government’s response to the NDIS Review and Disability Royal Commission recommendations for broader reforms.

A quick snapshot across the groups follows.

The **Better Planning** working group has:

* Reviewed resources and information available to participants to help them manage their plans.
* Continued to work and provide advice on ways to improve the check-in process.
* Discussed ways the NDIA and our partners can better support participants to manage their plan funding within their approved plan budget and duration.

The **Integrity** working group has:

* Collaborated with the Fraud Fusion Taskforce on the stories, words and information to be used in a communications campaign targeting providers.
* Developed examples of good and bad provider behaviour against a 'fraud scale'.
* Provided feedback on principles used in the Ethics and Human Oversight Framework.
* Created a preliminary fraud reporting pathway to establish a secure and fair procedure for individuals wishing to report instances of fraud.
* At the March 2024 meeting, the Fraud Working Group members agreed to change the name of their initiative to ‘Integrity’.

The **Workforce Capability** working group has:

* Created a skills matrix and list of key mindsets for frontline staff, to improve the experience NDIS participants and people with disability have with NDIA team members.
* Provided feedback on planner recruitment, including looking at position description and improvements the NDIA can make to better attract people with disability to work at the Agency.
* Develop recommendations for improvement to the Participant Satisfaction Survey.
* Explored the topic of ‘person centred practice’ with the staff and developed 'mindsets’ for staff while working with participants and their families.

The **Plan Flexibility** working group has:

* Considered and drafted improvements to eligibility reassessment processes including updates to guidelines, participant letters and information and resources available when transition from the Scheme.
* Drafted and reviewed a new early intervention eligibility requirements fact sheet.
* Reviewed new parent resources on selecting a safe provider.
* Held initial discussions regarding Early Intervention definition, principles and outcomes.

The **Home and Living** working group has:

* Reviewed the current home and living decision process to streamline and improve communications for participants, including development of new checklist, minimum evidence required and factsheets.
* Made recommendations to improve the home and living information on the NDIS website.

The **Evidence Based Supports** working group met in May to discuss preferred provider arrangements and improvements to support coordination materials, and will meet again in July to discuss proposed plan management improvements.

Public updates on co-design progress are published to the [NDIS website](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndis.gov.au%2Fnews%2F9524-reform-outcomes-program-quarterly-meeting-summary&data=05%7C01%7CAlexandria.ROSENTHAL%40ndis.gov.au%7C1a1f4e2e64d6432fdf9608dba8116e58%7Ccd778b65752d454a87cfb9990fe58993%7C0%7C0%7C638288565060741211%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=bCW6Q0FBl5yT3F1GiGUa1Sfqs%2Fhfm7NJslcS0rj2vW0%3D&reserved=0).

In April an evaluation of co-design processes commenced. The objective of this evaluation project is to facilitate learning and improvement, acknowledging that the NDIA is in its early stages of co-design implementation and there is an opportunity to develop an effective approach based on stakeholder feedback.

In May the NDIA is also host two workshops with members from across all working groups to discuss how the Agency can better support participants to identify and manage provider conflict of interests, and ways we can improve the check-in process.

This quarter the NDIA also started consulting with Disability Representative and Carer Organisations, the Independent Advisory Council and Participant Reference Group on the next phase of co-design – including priority topics and approach to how we deliver co-design, consultation and engagement activities.

### **PACE Update**

We are now 6 months into the gradual rollout of our new computer system and processes across Australia.

Recently, the number of people contacting the NDIA has been higher than usual. This means it is taking us longer than normal to get back to everyone.

Our NDIA staff and NDIS partners are working hard to prioritise applicant and participant requests – starting with the most urgent cases.

People waiting for us to assess their application to join the NDIS can talk to their NDIS partner about community and mainstream services available to them.

Participants who have asked for a change to their plan, can use their core support budget of their existing plan flexibly to access the required disability related supports.

Applicants and participants who are waiting to hear from us can find more information on our [support budgets webpage](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/managing-your-plan/support-budgets-your-plan).

#### **Supporting applicants and participants to transition to the new system**

Applicants, participants and their supporters can find information and resources about the next step in their NDIS journey on our [dedicated website](https://improvements.ndis.gov.au/). Resources include:

* A [participant journey map](https://improvements.ndis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-11/The%20participant%20journey.pdf) to help people understand the changes our new computer system and processes will bring.
* A range of [factsheets](https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/booklets-and-factsheets) to support the new participant journey and process.
* Videos for participants to learn more about how to use [the my NDIS participant portal](https://improvements.ndis.gov.au/participants/my-ndis-participant-portal-and-app).

Information sessions are also being run on how we are improving the NDIS experience. For more details on session locations and topics, please [visit our events page.](https://ndis.gov.au/news/events)

#### **Ongoing system improvements**

We continue to make changes and improvements to our new system and our new ways of working, based on feedback from participants, the disability community, providers and our staff and partners.

In early May, we introduced a system fix so participants and nominees of participants who have recently turned 18 can use the my NDIS participant portal to update their bank account details.

We are also starting to call families of participants nearing their 18th birthday. This helps us to make sure our new system’s information is up to date when the participant turns 18.

By making continued improvements like these, we are making sure the system works as expected and that we are delivering an improved experience for participants and everyone who interacts with the NDIS.

## News from the disability community

### **Draft National Autism Strategy**

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is working with the Autistic and autism community to create a National Autism Strategy that will support Autistic people across Australia to live the lives they want and deserve.

DSS has worked alongside the National Autism Strategy Oversight Council to develop the [Draft National Autism Strategy](https://engage.dss.gov.au/?page_id=25395&preview=true). The Oversight Council is made up of 10 Autistic members and also includes six (6) government representatives from across social services, education, health, NDIA, Prime Minister and Cabinet and employment.

Consultation on the draft Strategy is now open and people can provide feedback at [DSS engagement website](https://engage.dss.gov.au/developing-the-national-autism-strategy/feedback-on-the-draft-national-autism-strategy/).

To read more about the development of the Nation Autism Strategy, please visit [Developing the National Autism Strategy](https://engage.dss.gov.au/developing-the-national-autism-strategy/feedback-on-the-draft-national-autism-strategy/).