



Women
With
Disabilities
Australia
(WWDA)

Women With Disabilities Australia Fact Sheet

The NDIS: What it is, why it is important and how to apply.

2022





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Disabilities
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Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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What is the NDIS?

The NDIS is the short name for the National Disability Insurance Scheme – the only national government program that gives money to people with disability to access supports they need. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is in charge of the NDIS. You can apply for the NDIS in any Australian state or territory.

The NDIS gives reasonable and necessary financial support to Australians with a permanent and significant disability.

The NDIS defines a **permanent disability** as a “disability that is likely to be life long”.

Significant is defined as “a disability which impacts on people’s abilities to do everyday activities”.

The NDIS defines reasonable and necessary support as:

- Support that has to do with people’s disabilities.
- Support that is successful in meeting people’s disability needs.

The NDIS does not support everyday living costs like food, rent, and bills.

People who get financial support from the NDIS are called “NDIS participants”. As an NDIS participant you have control over your funding:

- You can choose what services you spend your money on.
- You can choose which service providers you want to use
- You can choose how the supports will be given to you.

If you are an NDIS participant, you will have ‘partners in the community’ who work with the NDIS will support you.

These are:

1. Local Area Coordinators (LAC) who:

- Support you to understand and get the NDIS
- Help you to make and manage a plan
- Connect you to service providers in the community.

2. Early Childhood Partners who are like Local Area Coordinators but:

- Support children with disabilities who are 0 to 7 years
- Support their families,

NDIS Eligibility

To apply for the NDIS you must:

- Have a permanent and significant disability.
- Be under 65 (if you are over 65 you may be eligible for the Commonwealth Continuity of Support Programme).
- Live in Australia.
- Be an Australian Citizen, have a permanent Visa or a protected special category Visa.

Gender disparity in the NDIS

There is a gender disparity in the NDIS. This means that there are less women, girls, and non-binary people who are NDIS participants (37%), than there are men and boys (63%).¹

People have given many reasons for this disparity:

For example:

- Women may be less able to ask for their needs. This is because society teaches women and girls to ignore their needs. This means women may not get their needs recognised and met.
- Women less likely to have the work they do as carers (for example, for children, partners and the elderly) recognised and supported.
- There are some disabilities where women are under diagnosed such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This becomes a barrier when they want to apply for the NDIS.²

Because of this gender inequality, it is extremely important that women, girls, feminine identifying and non-binary people continue to apply for the NDIS. There are many organisations and advocates that can help you apply. Many people who are successful in getting NDIS funding were supported by family, professionals, advocates and service organisations.³



Your right to supports

In 2008 Australia signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to protect the rights and freedom of people with disabilities.⁴ This includes women and girls. This convention says that women and girls have the right to get support and services equally to men.

It can be a challenge to understand and apply for the NDIS, but there are supports and services to help you. See section **support to apply for the NDIS** later in this fact sheet.

What supports can I get?

There are a few different types of supports available through the NDIS. These include:

Home and daily living supports, such as:

- Support to live independently, like help with cooking or buying groceries.
- Support to improve your living skills. For example, the NDIS can pay for things like cooking classes.
- Support to improve social and communication skills. For example, a support worker can travel with you to art and sports groups.
- Support with personal care, like showering and dressing.
- Help around the home, like cleaning and gardening.
- Accommodation, like support to find accessible housing.
- Funds to modify the home. For example, to install a handrail or accessible shower.
- Everyday items, like continence pads.



Health and Wellbeing supports, such as:

- Therapeutic support, like physiotherapy or occupational therapy.
- Behavioural support. For example, positive behaviour therapists can support you to improve your relationships.
- Psychological and mental health support, like therapy with a psychologist.
- Exercise and diet advice.
- Disability supports and products. For example, funds for support workers.
- Support to participate in community. For example, a support worker to assist with going to events or public places.
- Women's health services. For example sexual and reproductive health services or family violence services.

Work support services, such as:

- Support in the workplace, like a support worker or screen reader for a computer.
- Employment counseling.
- Employment services to help you find or train for employment.
- Support to start and run a business.
- Support to change to a different job.

Assistive technologies (AT) and equipment to do with a person's disability. This can include equipment to assist with:

- Mobility. E.g. a wheelchair.
- Personal care. E.g. pressure cushions.
- Communication. E.g. an ipad or hearing aid.

Support for lifelong learning, such as:

- Support to move from school to further education.
- Support with education programs. E.g. university or TAFE.
- Support with managing study.
- Support to apply for an education program.
- Support to connect with student and disability services.



Transport support, such as:

- Support or funds to use public transport.
- Support or funds to travel to work.
- Support or funds to travel to school.
- Support or funds to learn to drive.

Applying for the NDIS

When you apply for the NDIS you deserve the best support possible. To do this the NDIS has made the NDIS Participant Service Charter.

This includes 5 ways that the NDIS should work with you:

- Transparency: staff should make it easy for you to find and understand information.
- Responsive: staff should respect your individual needs and situation.
- Respectful: staff should recognise your personal experience and respect you as an expert in your own life.
- Empowering: staff should make it easy for you to find information and feel supported.
- Connected: staff should support you to find the services and supports you need.

You can read the [NDIS Participant Charter on the NDIS website](#).

How to apply for the NDIS

There are 3 ways you can apply for the NDIS. When you apply for the NDIS this is called an Access Request.

1. Over the phone.

To apply over the phone, call **1800 800 110** and ask to make an access request.

2. Online.

To apply online, download the Access Request Form from the [NDIS website here](#).

This form needs to be filled in digitally. You must also sign your signature digitally. Fill in the form and return it by email at NAT@ndis.gov.au. If you are unable to sign your signature in this way you can either:

- Print the form and fill it out or ask someone to support you, for example a local area coordinator.

OR

- Call **1800 800 110** and ask for an Access Request Form to be sent to you by post.

You can return this form in two ways:

- By email NAT@ndis.gov.au
- By post at **GPO Box 700 Canberra ACT 2601**.

3. Through a LAC or NDIA Office.

You can also contact your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or NDIA office to ask and make an Access Request.

If you need support to fill in the Access Request Form you can call:

- Your local area coordinator.
- Early childhood partner.
- Local NDIA office.
- A disability advocate.

Do you want to apply to the NDIS for your child, who is 0-7 years?

You can learn about the Early Childhood Approach [here](#).

You can then call your local Early Childhood Partner to make an Access Request. If you are unable to find an Early Childhood Partner in your area you can:

- Call **1800 800 110** and ask for help to find an Early Childhood Partner.
- Ask your health professional for help to find an Early Childhood Partner.

Information you will need to provide when you apply

Information you will need to provide will include:

- Your personal information such as name and address. If you have chosen someone to act on your behalf, you will need their name also.
- If you wish to give the NDIS permission to take your personal information and share it with other people. This could include family, doctors, support workers, and other government services. This will help the NDIS better understand your needs.
- Documents that proves your age, residency such as citizenship or visa status, and disability. In section 2, information about your disability can be filled out by your doctor. Or you can attach reports and assessments you already have.

Extra information

After you make an Access Request the NDIS may ask you for extra information. This is called Additional Supporting Evidence. The NDIS will let you know if they need extra information.

This may include information about your disability and how it impacts on your everyday living. You can give the NDIS this information from:

- Letters and reports you already have. Like from a doctor, psychologist or occupational therapist.
- Or ask your doctor or health professional to fill out a [Supporting Evidence Form](#).

This extra information can be:

- Emailed to NAT@ndis.gov.au.
- Or posted to **GPO Box 700 Canberra ACT 2601**.



Support to apply for the NDIS

There are many organisations that can support you to access the NDIS.

Types of supports include:

- Information about the NDIS.
- Information and planning workshops on the NDIS.
- Individual advocacy to apply to the NDIS.

You may want to begin by looking at some of the organisations and networks below:

- [Children and Young People with Disability Australia](#) have put together a document on what young people thought about their interaction with the NDIS.
- [People with Disabilities Australia](#) have an advocacy support service for people wanting help to access the NDIS.
- [Pride Disability Services](#) Serves LGBTQIA + and gender diverse communities. You can find their services in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and regional areas.
- [The Disability Hub](#) is a website where you can search for disability organisations by state.
- [The Equality Project](#) has a QueerAbility toolkit for LGBTQIA + and gender diverse people to access the NDIS.
- [Women with Disabilities Victoria](#) has a very useful fact sheet and checklist about how to access the NDIS for women and girls.

You can also visit the [The Disability Gateway](#) to find services for people with disability across Australia.



What to do if your access request is not successful

You can still get support from a Local Area Coordinator or Early Childhood Partner to find services in your community.

If you disagree with the outcome of your application, you can ask the NDIS to review it. This is called an internal review. Call **1800 800 110** and ask for an internal review. Or fill in a [Request for a Review of a Decision Form here](#). You can ask a support person or disability advocate to help you fill in the form.

If you do not agree with the decision of the review, you can then apply for an independent review. This is called an external review. This is with the Administrative Appeal Tribunal (AAT) [here](#). You can learn about and apply for an external review [here](#).



When your application is successful

When the NDIS approves your Access Request you will be asked to attend a planning meeting. At the planning meeting you will make a plan based on your needs and goals.

You will meet with your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or Early Childhood partner to make a plan. You have the right to choose a LAC that you feel comfortable with. You also have the right to bring someone to the meeting to support you.

At this meeting you may talk about:

- Supports you get from government and community.
- How you manage your everyday activities.
- Any safety, equipment, and accommodation supports you may need.
- Support you may need around the home.
- Goals you want to reach.
- Ways you can manage your plan.
- The support you will need to use your plan.

Your LAC or Early Childhood Partner will let you know how long it will take to approve your plan. When the NDIA approves the plan, your LAC or early childhood partner will support you to manage your plan.

How to manage your NDIS plan

In your planning meeting you will also discuss how you would like to manage your plan. You can manage your plan yourself or your LAC or the NDIS to manage your plan. There are three types of plan management, including:

1. Self Managed

This means you manage your plan yourself. If you self-manage, you will need to find

services yourself and pay for them, then get reimbursed from the NDIS. You can do this through the My Place Portal on the Australian My Gov website. You can also manage your NDIS plan on the go on the NDIS mobile App.

One benefit of self-managing is that you can use services that are not registered with the NDIS.

2. Plan Managed

This means that you will have a plan manager who can find services and pay for them on your behalf. If your NDIS funding is Plan Managed, you can only use NDIS registered services.

3. NDIA Managed

This means that your plan is managed by the NDIA directly. If you are NDIA managed, an NDIA worker will find services and pay for them on your behalf.

You can manage your plan in the My Place Portal on the Australian My Gov website. You can also manage your NDIS plan on the go on the NDIS mobile App.

NDIS Budget Allocations

A budget is the amount of money or funding the NDIS gives you to pay for supports and services you set out in your plan.

There are currently 3 different types of budgets to suit your needs and goals. These are the Core Supports budget, the Capacity Building supports budget, and the Capital Supports budget.

1. Core Supports Budget.

This supports you with your everyday activities and your disability-related needs. This is the most flexible budget, most of the time you can use your funding in any of the 4 support types below:

- Support with daily life, like cooking and cleaning.
- Support with everyday items, like continence aids or apps to help manage work or study.
- Transport.
- Support to improve relationships, like through a relationship counsellor.
- Support to improve health and well-being, like appointments with a dietician, psychologist or physio-therapist.
- Support to improve learning, like advice and support to move from school to higher education, or find a suitable education course.
- Support to improve daily living, like appointments with an occupational therapist to increase independence and personal skills.

2. Capacity Building Budget.

Funds under this budget are to help you to build your independence and skills. Funds in this budget are usually split into particular categories and can only be used for one support type. The types of supports your Capacity Building Budget may cover include:

- A support coordinator to help you use your plan.
- Support to improve living, like cooking classes or support to learn how to clean.
- Support to participate in social activities and the community. For example, a support worker to take you to social groups or events.

3. Capital Supports Budget.

Funds under this budget can help you access:

- Assistive technology and equipment, like a screen reader or mobility wheelchair.
- Support to modify home and car, like to install a ramp or rail.
- One-off items you may need.

Finding the best services for you

A service provider is an individual, business or organisation who provides services, for example physiotherapy.

Based on your plan, your coordinator or partner may support you to connect with service providers in your area.

You can look for service providers on the MyPlace portal or on the NDIS website. The NDIS Provider Finder helps you find your closest NDIS provider based on your suburb and postcode. You can look for service providers, check reviews, and connect with different providers.

If your plan is Self-Managed, you can use any service, even if they are not an NDIS registered provider. However if your plan is Plan-Managed or NDIA-managed, you will be limited to NDIS registered providers.



NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is an organisation independent of the NDIA. They make sure NDIS services are safe and of good quality.

They help make sure:

- You feel safe and you can get good quality services.
- You have choice and control over what service providers you choose.
- Providers and workers know and follow the rules for quality and safety.

Making a complaint about an NDIS provider or service

If you feel unsafe or unhappy with a service provider and their workers, you can talk to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

If you feel comfortable, you can try talking to your provider try this first.

If you feel uncomfortable or are unable to fix the problem, you should make a complaint to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. To make a complaint with the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission you can:

- Call **1800 035 544**.
- Or fill in an online complaint form on the commission's [website here](#).

If you need support to make a complaint, you can ask a support person or disability advocate.

You can find a disability advocate in your area using the [Australian Government finder here](#).



Endnotes

- 1 National Disability Insurance Agency (2019) NDIS: [Analysis of Participants by Gender](#), National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- 2 Yates, S, Carey, G, Hargrove, J, Malbon, E, & Green, C (2021) '[Women's experiences of accessing individualised disability supports: Gender inequality and Australia's National Disability Insurance Scheme](#)', *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 20(243).
- 3 Women with Disabilities Victoria (2019) [Submission on the NDIS Act Review and NDIS participant service guarantee discussion paper](#).
- 4 OHCHR 1996-2021, [The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).