

WA NDIS: The National Disability Insurance Scheme delivered locally

Introduction

On 31 January 2017 the Commonwealth and WA State governments signed a Bilateral Agreement for a nationally consistent, WA-delivered NDIS.

From 1 July 2017, the NDIS will roll-out across Western Australia. All eligible people will have access to the Scheme by 2020.

People currently accessing the NDIS in the WA trial sites will continue to do so.

The WA NDIS

- WA NDIS *is* the NDIS. It's the same national Scheme. The WA NDIS delivers the Scheme locally.
- The WA NDIS fully reflects the principles and intent of the NDIS as designed in consultation with people with disability, families and carers. West Australians with disability will gain access to all the benefits of the national Scheme with the added benefit of support informed by local knowledge and connections.
- People with disability in WA will not be disadvantaged in any way compared to people participating in the Scheme across the country.
- WA actively participates in NDIS policy development with the Commonwealth Government and other States and Territories. WA NDIS policies are aligned with national policy requirements.
- Operational policies will guide the WA NDIS so it is able to respond to the local environment.
- All WA NDIS policies are publicly available online. A range of formats and languages can be provided upon request.

Design in partnership

- During the two and a half years of the NDIS trials in WA we have learnt a lot about the way people want the NDIS to operate in our State. As the WA NDIS rolls out across WA, many improvements and refinements will continue to be made.
- WA is committed to continuing to engage with people with disability. The process of working in partnership to refine and improve the WA NDIS will be ongoing as we continue to learn what people in WA want and need from their Scheme. Consultation on key operational policies will continue in partnership with WA advocacy organisations.

Governance of the WA NDIS

- The WA NDIS will be delivered by a State Government authority specifically designed for that purpose, governed by a seven-member independent WA Board. The WA Board and the authority's responsibilities will be set out in State legislation which will mirror the national legislation.
- The Commonwealth and WA governments will consult on the appointment of the Chair of the WA Board. The WA Minister for Disability Services will appoint four board members and three members will be appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the Commonwealth Minister.
- The new governance arrangements will be in place by the time the WA NDIS completes roll-out in 2020.

Insurance principles and early intervention

- The WA NDIS will operate on nationally consistent insurance principles, with a strong focus on early intervention across all life stages.
- Individual plans will ensure that appropriate strategies and resources are allocated today to ensure the best outcomes over a lifetime.
- The WA NDIS will retain one of the nation's best actuarial firms to independently monitor and report on the application of the insurance approach.

Funding for the NDIS in WA

- The agreement between the State and Commonwealth governments sets out that West Australians with disability will have the same access to funding and supports as anywhere else in the nation.
- The guidelines on what is considered 'reasonable and necessary' support are consistent with the rest of the nation.
- The funding agreement separately identifies and accounts for contributions to the different parts of the Scheme. The funding for Local Coordinators, Administration and Information, Linkages and Capacity Building is separate from the funding for individuals' package costs.
- Funding for package costs will be provided by the State and Commonwealth on the basis of people entering the Scheme and their reasonable and necessary supports.
- Funding for package costs will be acquitted in arrears, ensuring neither party accrues a large underspend or cash reserves.
- Under the NDIS, there is no 'block funding'. Each person's funding is individualised to meet their unique needs.
- As Western Australia moves to full scheme NDIS, block funding arrangements will be phased out and transitioned to individualised reasonable and necessary supports. The timing of these changes will vary from program to program.

Who is eligible for the WA NDIS?

- The eligibility criteria for the WA NDIS are identical to the criteria in every other part of the nation.
- To be eligible for the WA NDIS, people with disability (including psychosocial disability) need to meet eligibility requirements including age, residence and either disability or early intervention requirements.
- Anyone who has already been found eligible for the WA NDIS, or the NDIS elsewhere in Australia, will be automatically eligible.

Planning and choice

- We have heard from the community that people value their Local Coordinator as someone who knows them, is located in their community and is a voice independent of service provision.
- WA NDIS will offer a personalised service that does not require people to use 1800 phone number Centrelink-style contact or over-the-phone planning.
- We also recognise that some people want further flexibility and choice. Each person chooses their goals and strategies based on the outcomes they want to achieve in their life, and the service providers who will provide their funded supports.
- People can involve whomever they choose in the planning process. This includes, but is not limited to, family members, supporters, advocates and services providers. A person can also choose to develop and submit their own plan. Local Coordinators can be involved as much or as little in planning as the person chooses.
- People can also access external support coordination to assist with managing complex situations and supports. A Local Coordinator will approve the reasonable and necessary supports in the plan in line with nationally agreed principles, as is the case in the NDIA model where a Planner approves supports.
- For some people, plan reviews are a critical way of responding to changes in their lives or support needs, or for building an important safety net around life events. For others plan reviews can be an interruption or inconvenience. Based on this feedback from people with disability, their supporters and service providers, the WA NDIS will ensure there is flexibility in the way plan reviews are conducted and timed.

Service coordination

- Local Coordinators are available to provide support and coordination in the WA NDIS, and to assist people with disability to plan for their current and future needs.
- Where the coordination of a person's supports is particularly complex, support coordination can be included as a funded strategy in their plan, and he or she can choose a service provider to coordinate those services.
- Episodic coordination can be included in a person's plan at times of major life transition where they need to find and coordinate various different services.
- Choice and control in the selection of providers is an essential component of the WA NDIS. A person can change their service provider without consulting their Local Coordinator where there is no change to the supports or funding allocated in their approved plan. Where a new service provider will change the supports

or funding, a review of the person's plan will be undertaken to ensure all of these changes are captured and the plan remains flexible and appropriate for the person.

Portability

- Because the WA NDIS is the national Scheme, a person's plan and funding can move with them anywhere in the country.
- People have already successfully moved between States and Territories seamlessly and this will continue.

Support in your local area

- Local Coordinators provide people with disability and their families with a single contact point that is locally based, and has knowledge and connections to the local community.
- Local Coordinators also have strong connections with mainstream services including education and health. These connections provide additional support and assistance to ensure people's holistic needs are considered and all their supports are working together. This is particularly critical in regional and remote areas of the State.
- Local Coordination originated in WA and has evolved and expanded over the past 25 years to meet the changing needs of people with disability. WA NDIS staff will continue to live and work in local areas throughout the State.
- Local Coordination is a key component of the Scheme nationally and it will continue to be a key component of the WA NDIS.
- If you are currently linked to a Local Coordinator, this will continue as the WA NDIS rolls out.

Linking people to services and supports

- The State is participating in the development of a national quality and safeguarding system and a new national market. The agreement with the Commonwealth confirms the State's commitment to working within the national quality and market systems.
- Currently, the NDIS in each State and Territory builds on existing quality and safeguarding processes. In WA, there are over 175 service providers operating in the WA NDIS who are quality assured via the State's quality system.
- In the WA NDIS the individual chooses the service providers they believe best

fit their needs. Local Coordinators don't determine which service providers may be connected to a plan. If they like, people can get support to navigate the service system and find the right service provider for them.

- People can change service providers at any time. The State is working to ensure this process is as streamlined and simple as possible.

The contracting model in the WA NDIS

- The Commission has a service agreement with each provider registered to provide services. This service agreement is also referred to as a 'contract'.
- The service agreement between the Commission and a service provider details the standard of service they must provide and how payments will be made for the services provided. It does not replace a relationship between the person and the provider. Rather, it ensures quality service provision and safeguarding for the individual.
- A person's plan outlines which providers they have chosen to deliver their funded supports to assist them to meet their goals through the strategies outlined in their plan. The person decides how much of their plan information they want to share with the service providers they have engaged.
- Where someone self-manages their services, the service provider may have a contract with them that identifies the terms and conditions that both parties will abide by, such as how payment will be made, and how much notice must be given if services are cancelled.

Self-management

- As the WA NDIS rolls out across the State, people will continue to have the option to manage their own support arrangements and will be assisted to do so if they choose.
- The areas already part of the WA NDIS have the highest rate of self-management in the nation. This demonstrates that people are being supported to exercise choice in their support arrangements.
- Under the WA NDIS, the amount of support does not differ according to plan management type. If a person requires 50 hours of therapy support for example, their plan will reflect this 50 hours. People will not receive a funding amount which they then have to stretch to cover their required hours.
- The fundamentals of self-management in the WA NDIS include the following:
 - The WA NDIS does not fix prices for services, regardless of whether a person chooses to manage their own supports or access services from a service provider.
 - People who choose to self-manage their own services will have access to the funds required to purchase the supports they have chosen in their

plan. In addition, people who choose self-management will also have access to funding to purchase the administration and practical support needed to manage their plans.

Access to equipment

- Nationally the NDIS is reliant on the assistive technology and equipment services of each State and Territory. This is the case in WA. The State has been an active participant of national working groups assessing the future of assistive technology procurement nationally.
- The ‘budget holder’ concept is not the former Community Aids and Equipment Program. It is an accounting mechanism to demonstrate expenditure of specific WA NDIS funds during trial. People are free to choose who prescribes and arranges their equipment and technology.
- The WA NDIS will continue to ensure that people can access the assistive technology and equipment they need from a provider of their choice.

Market stewardship and the approach to pricing

- The approach to pricing in WA for NDIS supports and services will continue to be one which reflects the real cost of delivering services in WA. The WA NDIS does not fix prices.
- WA is a very large and diverse State. Ensuring that people can access quality supports and services in even the most remote areas of the State is a challenge. The WA NDIS will be flexible enough to work with local communities to develop markets that respond locally to local challenges.
- Over the past two and a half years the number of service providers operating in the State’s WA NDIS trial has increased from 100 to more than 175 registered providers. This provides people with disability more choice.
- Service providers registered for the WA NDIS have provided information and evidence to satisfy government that they have the ability to provide the services they offer, and meet National Standards for Disability Services. People with disability, families and carers can have confidence in choosing these providers.
- Market development is driven by the demand for choice by people with disability. The WA NDIS uses a detailed actuarial model to monitor and evaluate what strategies people are choosing in their plans to establish where there may be gaps in service availability across the State. This information informs service and sector development initiatives.

Weekend and weekday rates

- The WA NDIS provides price bands for services, which reflect the current disability market in WA. The bands recognise the average amount of support provided by an organisation over a year. This approach allows service providers to flexibly apply rates across different periods of time, week days, week-day evenings, Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.
- The WA NDIS pricing frameworks for disability services in WA will continue to be refined over time.

Travel

- Where a service provider is required to travel, the first 15km in an outward and return journey are included within the unit price charged by a service provider. Distances over the first 15km can be charged by the service provider.
- Up to \$1,000 per year for this kind of travel may be included in a person's WA NDIS plan.
- The Commission is working in partnership with the sector to develop an accessibility/remoteness index to provide additional resources for people accessing the WA NDIS in regional and remote areas.

Sustainability of the scheme in WA

- The WA community can be confident that the Scheme will be available for coming generations. The WA NDIS is fully funded to meet the needs of every eligible person in WA.
- Because of its tradition of individualised funding and local service delivery, the State has been able to build on its existing depth of knowledge of the number of people likely to be eligible.
- The State has also undertaken extensive analysis of the NDIS trials both in WA and nationally to ensure that the NDIS in WA will be rolled out effectively to every eligible person in WA.
- The State will pay for 75 per cent of any additional costs that may arise from the eligible population being higher than forecast.

Appeals

- The State Government has agreed that the WA NDIS will use the national appeals process. This will be in place by the time roll-out has been completed in 2020.

Information, Linkages and Capacity Building

- Western Australia was actively involved in the development of the national Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Framework (ILC) and has committed to its implementation in WA.
- The WA ILC Commissioning Framework will be nationally aligned while also being targeted to deliver what Western Australians are asking for.
- ILC in WA will be implemented from 2017.

Interface with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)

- The State Government is committed to maximising Scheme investments that are being made in other parts of the nation.
- There is a State and Commonwealth commitment to data sharing, facilitating portability, and ongoing improvements to the Scheme based on the learnings from the implementation of the NDIS across Australia. The State is a key participant in national NDIS policy design.