

OFFICIAL



NDIS Support Needs Assessment

[ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au) | March 2026

1

OFFICIAL



OFFICIAL

Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past present and emerging.

I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

OFFICIAL

Housekeeping

Access the Q&A by:

- Desktop: Click the Q&A icon in the top menu bar.
- Browser: Click the 3 dots in the top menu bar and select Q&A.
- Mobile: Tap the 3 dots at the bottom of your screen and select Q&A.
- Screen reader: Navigate to move actions (ALT+Q) and select Q&A.

Technical support: events@ndis.gov.au



OFFICIAL

Delivering Support Needs Assessments

A Support Needs Assessment (SNA) will be part of the Agency's **new way of planning** from mid-2026.

A support needs assessment will collect information from participants, families and carers about participants' disability support needs. This information will be used to create more flexible budgets and plans.

This change responds to the **NDIS Review recommendation 3; to provide a fairer and more consistent participant pathway.**

The Agency has committed to working with participants and the disability sector to design and implement this change.



OFFICIAL

What is the Support Needs Assessment tool?

- The **Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs (I-CAN)** is developed by the Centre for Disability Studies.
- It is a **support needs assessment tool** for identifying support needs of people with disability aged 16 and over.
- It was developed by the **Centre for Disability Studies** and based on World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.
- It maps **support needs across 12 domains**, so complex needs are captured accurately.
- It is appropriate for **all disability types**.
- The NDIA's **Support Needs Assessment tool** is a customised implementation of I-CAN v6 for Scheme purposes.



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

SNA tool for NDIA

- We're partnering with the **University of Melbourne** and the **Centre for Disability Studies** to develop and tailor the tool to meet the unique needs of the NDIS over the next five years.
- The program of work to tailor the tool includes **consultation with the disability community and disability sector**.
- The tool will form the basis of the NDIS support needs assessment. This will be different to the version of I-CAN currently used by some practitioners in the NDIS market.



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

How it's used

- The assessment is **flexible, person-centred**, and **tailored to the person's circumstances**.
- It uses **strengthens-based language** to describe what a person can do and the support they need.
- It is an online tool that can be delivered **online or in-person**.
- The I-CAN scores the support needs of a person by calculating the:
 - Frequency of support, and
 - Level of support required to meet a participant's needs.



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Comprehensive assessment of support needs

12 domains and sub-domains

Mobility

e.g. Transfers and positioning, carrying, moving and handling objects, walking and moving

Domestic life

e.g. Shopping, cooking, cleaning and domestic tasks

Self-care

e.g. eating and drinking, personal care, toileting

Community, social and civic life

e.g. money and economic life, community life

Communication

e.g. preferred methods of communicating

Learning and applying knowledge

e.g. learning new tasks, decision making

General tasks and demands

e.g. daily routines, initiate and complete tasks

Lifelong learning

e.g. finding, choosing and applying for jobs

Interpersonal interactions and relationships

e.g. social skills, manage relationships

Behaviours of concern

e.g. behaviours that are hurtful to self or others

Mental and emotional health

e.g. mood, anxiety

Physical health

e.g. nervous system, sensory, pain, mouth, voice and speech



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Assessment tool scoring scales

Domains in the assessment tool are scored by frequency and intensity of support to provide a complete picture of needs and strengths.

Intensity

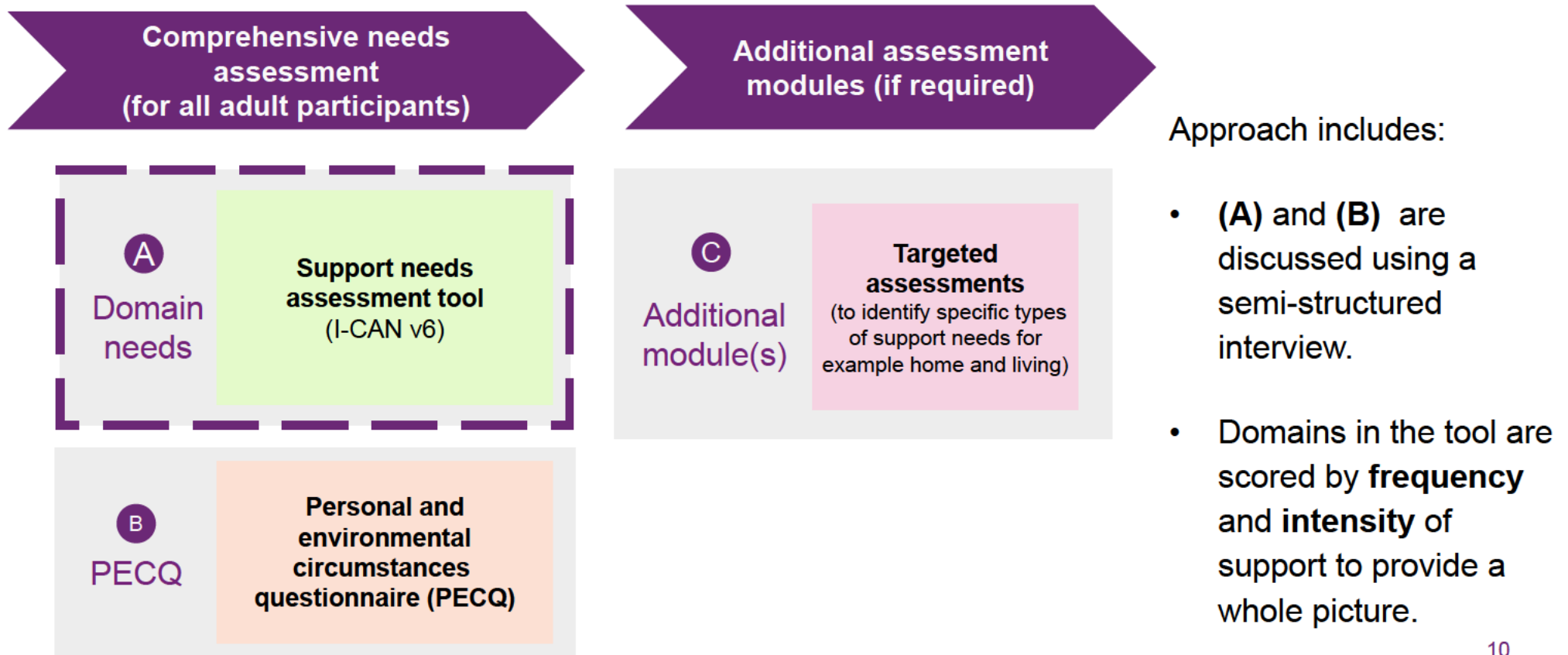
Score	Level	Description
0	Not applicable	Area is not relevant.
0	Independent	The person does not need support.
1	Managed independence	The support need is managed through the independent use of aids or equipment.
2	Minor	The person may need brief or minor support from another person.
3	Moderate	The person may need a series of prompts or instructions, reassurance or emotional support or more regular supervision, interpreting or clarifying communication for an unfamiliar communication partner, or physical assistance for some aspects of the task.
4	Extensive	The person needs extensive support for the majority of, or for, the entire task. Or the task is completed wholly for the person.
5	Pervasive	The person needs direct simultaneous support of two or more people.

Frequency

Score	Level	Description
0	Never	No support is required
1	Occasionally	Less than once per week
2	Weekly	1-6 times per week
3	Daily	1-3 times per day
4	Frequently	4 or more times per day
5	Continuously	Consistently throughout the day

OFFICIAL

Support needs assessment overview



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

What is the PECQ?

The PECQ is being redesigned for New Framework Planning. The purpose of the PECQ in New Framework Planning is to:

1. Collect additional information about participants' personal and environmental circumstances to support our understanding of their support needs. This includes information on living arrangements, employment and/or learning, and informal supports.
2. Integrate into the support needs assessment, alongside the I-CAN. We don't want participants to feel like they are completing two separate assessments, or to feel that they are repeating information through the participant pathway.
3. Be suitable for a range of participant groups, including First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse participants.

We expect the PECQ will be administered at various points in the pathway, including the needs assessment meeting.



Design of the Support Needs Assessment

In October 2025, the NDIA established the NDIS Design Hub to test and refine the new way of planning – including SNA products and processes – ahead of rollout, including:

- SNA preparation
- the SNA meeting, and
- SNA resources, for example, workbooks and web content.



Questions



Contact information

OFFICIAL

National Disability Insurance Agency



1800 800 110

ndis.gov.auenquiries@ndis.gov.au

Find us on Facebook/NDISAus



Follow us on Twitter @NDIS

For people with hearing or speech loss



TTY: 1800 555 677



Voice Relay: 1800 555 727

For people who need help with English



TIS: 131 450



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL



NDIS Support Needs Assessment

[ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au) | March 2026

OFFICIAL

1



OFFICIAL

Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past present and emerging.

I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

OFFICIAL

Housekeeping

Access the Q&A by:

- Desktop: Click the Q&A icon in the top menu bar.
- Browser: Click the 3 dots in the top menu bar and select Q&A.
- Mobile: Tap the 3 dots at the bottom of your screen and select Q&A.
- Screen reader: Navigate to move actions (ALT+Q) and select Q&A.

Technical support: events@ndis.gov.au



Slide 3

BA1

Taken from previous presentation - team please edit or remove as appropriate

b7E - personal priv



Brooke, 2026-02-25T00:32:40.904

OFFICIAL

Delivering Support Needs Assessments

A Support Needs Assessment (SNA) will be part of the Agency's **new way of planning** from mid-2026.

A support needs assessment will collect information from participants, families and carers about participants' disability support needs. This information will be used to create more flexible budgets and plans.

This change responds to the **NDIS Review recommendation 3; to provide a fairer and more consistent participant pathway.**

The Agency has committed to working with participants and the disability sector to design and implement this change.



OFFICIAL

What is the Support Needs Assessment tool?

- The **Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs (I-CAN)** is developed by the Centre for Disability Studies.
- It is a **support needs assessment tool** for identifying support needs of people with disability aged 16 and over.
- It was developed by the **Centre for Disability Studies** and based on World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.
- It maps **support needs across 12 domains**, so complex needs are captured accurately.
- It is appropriate for **all disability types**.
- The NDIA's **Support Needs Assessment tool** is a customised implementation of I-CAN v6 for Scheme purposes.



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

SNA tool for NDIA

- We're partnering with the **University of Melbourne** and the **Centre for Disability Studies** to develop and tailor the tool to meet the unique needs of the NDIS over the next five years.
- The program of work to tailor the tool includes **consultation with the disability community and disability sector**.
- The tool will form the basis of the NDIS support needs assessment. This will be different to the version of I-CAN currently used by some practitioners in the NDIS market.



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

How it's used

- The assessment is **flexible, person-centred**, and **tailored to the person's circumstances**.
- It uses **strengthens-based language** to describe what a person can do and the support they need.
- It is an online tool that can be delivered **online or in-person**.
- The I-CAN scores the support needs of a person by calculating the:
 - Frequency of support, and
 - Level of support required to meet a participant's needs.



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Comprehensive assessment of support needs

12 domains and sub-domains

Mobility

e.g. Transfers and positioning, carrying, moving and handling objects, walking and moving

Domestic life

e.g. Shopping, cooking, cleaning and domestic tasks

Self-care

e.g. eating and drinking, personal care, toileting

Community, social and civic life

e.g. money and economic life, community life

Communication

e.g. preferred methods of communicating

Learning and applying knowledge

e.g. learning new tasks, decision making

General tasks and demands

e.g. daily routines, initiate and complete tasks

Lifelong learning

e.g. finding, choosing and applying for jobs

Interpersonal interactions and relationships

e.g. social skills, manage relationships

Behaviours of concern

e.g. behaviours that are hurtful to self or others

Mental and emotional health

e.g. mood, anxiety

Physical health

e.g. nervous system, sensory, pain, mouth, voice and speech



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Assessment tool scoring scales

Domains in the assessment tool are scored by frequency and intensity of support to provide a complete picture of needs and strengths.

Intensity

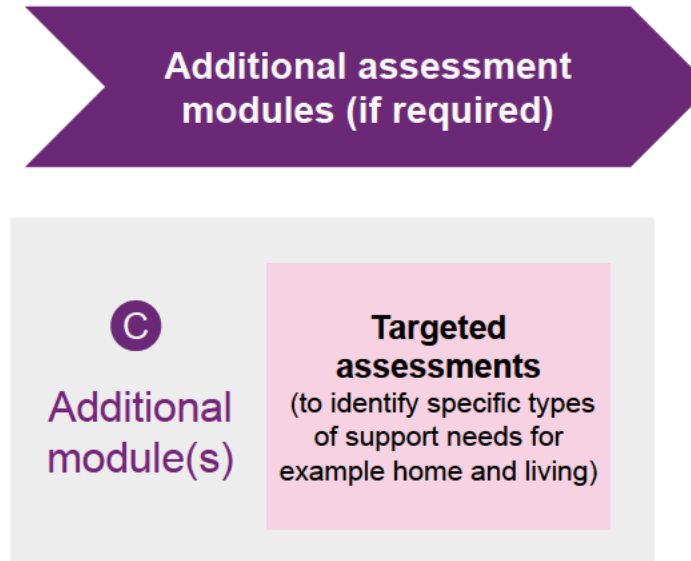
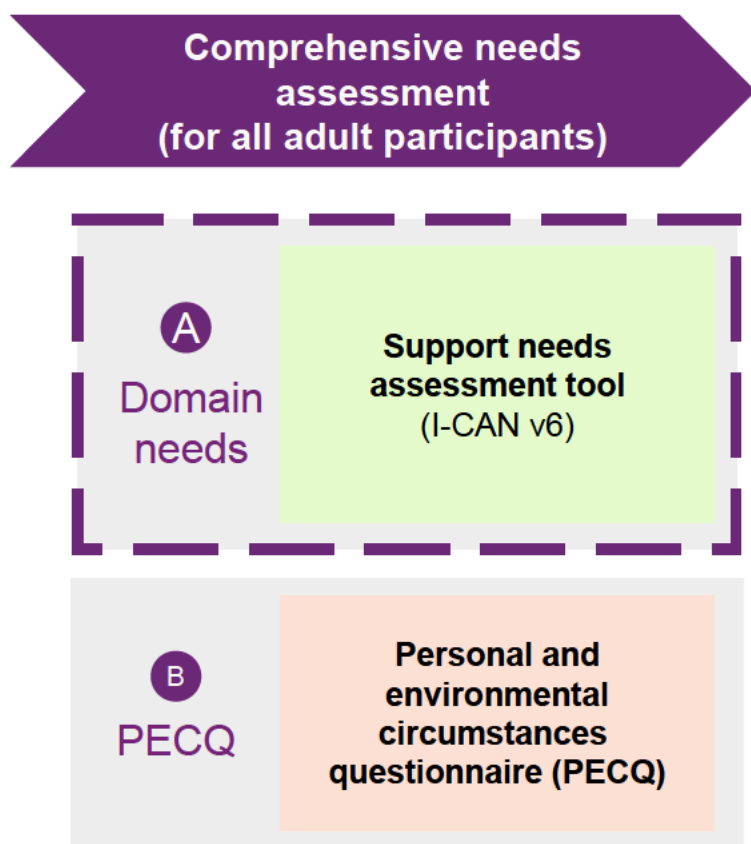
Score	Level	Description
0	Not applicable	Area is not relevant.
0	Independent	The person does not need support.
1	Managed independence	The support need is managed through the independent use of aids or equipment.
2	Minor	The person may need brief or minor support from another person.
3	Moderate	The person may need a series of prompts or instructions, reassurance or emotional support or more regular supervision, interpreting or clarifying communication for an unfamiliar communication partner, or physical assistance for some aspects of the task.
4	Extensive	The person needs extensive support for the majority of, or for, the entire task. Or the task is completed wholly for the person.
5	Pervasive	The person needs direct simultaneous support of two or more people.

Frequency

Score	Level	Description
0	Never	No support is required
1	Occasionally	Less than once per week
2	Weekly	1-6 times per week
3	Daily	1-3 times per day
4	Frequently	4 or more times per day
5	Continuously	Consistently throughout the day

OFFICIAL

Support needs assessment overview



Approach includes:

- **(A)** and **(B)** are discussed using a semi-structured interview.
- Domains in the tool are scored by **frequency** and **intensity** of support to provide a whole picture.

10

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

What is the PECQ?

The PECQ is being redesigned for New Framework Planning. The purpose of the PECQ in New Framework Planning is to:

1. Collect additional information about participants' personal and environmental circumstances to support our understanding of their support needs. This includes information on living arrangements, employment and/or learning, and informal supports.
2. Integrate into the support needs assessment, alongside the I-CAN. We don't want participants to feel like they are completing two separate assessments, or to feel that they are repeating information through the participant pathway.
3. Be suitable for a range of participant groups, including First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse participants.

We expect the PECQ will be administered at various points in the pathway, including the needs assessment meeting.



Preparing for a Support Needs Assessment



The participant:

- checks what they need to do to be ready for the support needs assessment
- makes sure their information is up to date



The NDIA:

- shares information and advice to help the participant get ready
- answers any questions about the new way of planning
- confirms the participant is ready to move to the new way of planning

Design of the Support Needs Assessment

In October 2025, the NDIA established the NDIS Design Hub to test and refine the new way of planning – including SNA products and processes – ahead of rollout, including:

- SNA preparation
- the SNA meeting, and
- SNA resources, for example, workbooks and web content.



Questions



Contact information

OFFICIAL

National Disability Insurance Agency



1800 800 110

ndis.gov.auenquiries@ndis.gov.au

Find us on Facebook/NDISAus



Follow us on Twitter @NDIS

For people with hearing or speech loss



TTY: 1800 555 677



Voice Relay: 1800 555 727

For people who need help with English



TIS: 131 450



OFFICIAL

The contents of this document are OFFICIAL.

NDIS Support Needs Assessment – March 2026

Slide 1: NDIS Support Needs Assessment

This is a header slide marking a new section/topic.

Slide 2: Acknowledgement of Country

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we meet today, and their continuing connection to land, sea, and community. I pay my respects to their Elders, past present and emerging.

I would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

Slide 3: Housekeeping

Access the Q&A by:

- Desktop: Click the Q&A icon in the top menu bar.
- Browser: Click the 3 dots in the top menu bar and select Q&A.
- Mobile: Tap the 3 dots at the bottom of your screen and select Q&A.
- Screen reader: Navigate to move actions (ALT+Q) and select Q&A.

Technical support: events@ndis.gov.au

Slide 4: Delivering Support Needs Assessments

A Support Needs Assessment (SNA) will be part of the Agency's **new way of planning** from mid-2026.

A support needs assessment will collect information from participants, families and carers about participants' disability support needs. This information will be used to create more flexible budgets and plans.

This change responds to the **NDIS Review recommendation 3; to provide a fairer and more consistent participant pathway.**

The Agency has committed to working with participants and the disability sector to design and implement this change.

Slide 5: What is the Support Needs Assessment tool?

- The Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs (I-CAN) is developed by the Centre for Disability Studies.
- It is a **support needs assessment tool** for identifying support needs of people with disability aged 16 and over.
- It was developed by the **Centre for Disability Studies** and based on World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.
- It maps **support needs across 12 domains**, so complex needs are captured accurately.
- It is appropriate for **all disability types**.
- The NDIA's **Support Needs Assessment tool** is a customised implementation of I-CAN v6 for Scheme purposes.

Slide 6: SNA tool for NDIA

We're partnering with the **University of Melbourne** and the **Centre for Disability Studies** to develop and tailor the tool to meet the unique needs of the NDIS over the next five years.

The program of work to tailor the tool includes **consultation with the disability community and disability sector**.

The tool will form the basis of the NDIS support needs assessment. This will be different to the version of I-CAN currently used by some practitioners in the NDIS market.

Slide 7: How it's used

- The assessment is flexible, person-centred, and tailored to the person's circumstances.
- It uses **strengthens-based language** to describe what a person can do and the support they need.
- It is an online tool that can be delivered **online or in-person**.
- The I-CAN scores the support needs of a person by calculating the:
 - Frequency of support, and
 - Level of support required to meet a participant's needs.

Slide 8: Comprehensive assessment of support needs

There are 12 domains and sub-domains:

Mobility e.g. Transfers and positioning, carrying, moving and handling objects, walking and moving.

Domestic life e.g. Shopping, cooking, cleaning and domestic tasks.

Self-care e.g. eating and drinking, personal care, toileting.

Community, social and civic life e.g. money and economic life, community life.

Communication e.g. preferred methods of communicating.

Learning and applying knowledge e.g. learning new tasks, decision making.

General tasks and demands e.g. daily routines, initiate and complete tasks.

Lifelong learning e.g. finding, choosing and applying for jobs.

Interpersonal interactions and relationships e.g. social skills, manage relationships.

Behaviours of concern e.g. behaviours that are hurtful to self or others.

Mental and emotional health e.g. mood, anxiety.

Physical health e.g. nervous system, sensory, pain, mouth, voice and speech.

Slide 9: Assessment tool scoring scales

Domains in the assessment tool are scored by frequency and intensity of support to provide a complete picture of needs and strengths.

Intensity scoring:

Score	Level	Description
0	Not applicable	Area is not relevant.
0	Independent	The person does not need support.
1	Managed independence	The support need is managed through the independent use of aids and equipment.
2	Minor	The person may need brief or minor support from another person.
3	Moderate	The person may need a series of prompts or instructions, reassurance or emotional support or more regular supervision, interpreting or clarifying communication for an unfamiliar communication partner, or physical assistance for some aspects of the task.
4	Extensive	The person needs extensive support for the majority of, or for, the entire task. Or the task is completed wholly for the person.
5	Pervasive	The person needs direct simultaneous support of two or more people.

Frequency scoring:

Score	Level	Description
0	Never	No support is required
1	Occasionally	Less than once per week
2	Weekly	1-6 times per week
3	Daily	1-3 times per day
4	Frequently	4 or more times per day
5	Continuously	Consistently throughout the day

Slide 10: Support needs assessment overview

A comprehensive needs assessment for adult participants will include:

- a) Support Needs Assessment
- b) Personal and Environmental Circumstances Questionnaire (PECQ)
- c) Additional modules for targeted assessments if required (e.g. home and living)

A and **B** are discussed using a semi-structured interview. Domains in the assessment tool are scored by frequency and intensity of support to provide a whole picture.

Slide 11: What is the PECQ?

The PECQ is being redesigned for New Framework Planning. The purpose of the PECQ in New Framework Planning is to:

1. Collect additional information about participants' personal and environmental circumstances to support our understanding of their support needs. This includes information on living arrangements, employment and/or learning, and informal supports.
2. Integrate into the support needs assessment, alongside the I-CAN. We don't want participants to feel like they are completing two separate assessments, or to feel that they are repeating information through the participant pathway.
3. Be suitable for a range of participant groups, including First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse participants.

We expect the PECQ will be administered at various points in the pathway, including the needs assessment meeting.

Slide 12: Preparing for a Support Needs Assessment

The participant:

- checks what they need to do to be ready for the support needs assessment.
- makes sure their information is up to date.

The NDIA:

- shares information and advice to help the participant get ready.
- answers any questions about the new way of planning.
- confirms the participant is ready to move to the new way of planning.

Slide 13: Design of the Support Needs Assessment

In October 2025, the NDIA established the NDIS Design Hub to test and refine the new way of planning – including SNA products and processes – ahead of rollout, including:

- SNA preparation
- the SNA meeting, and
- SNA resources, for example, workbooks and web content.

End of presentation.

Talking Points

The contents of this document are OFFICIAL

Background only – for verbal distribution only. Document strictly not for external distribution.

Briefing on the Support Needs Assessment

5 March 2026

How to use this information

These talking points are to assist Susan Moore, BM Co-design, and Clair Wheeler, GM Co-design and Engagement, when speaking with co-design working group members about the planning pathway and support needs assessment.

Note: This document is **not** a list of approved media lines.

Background

These talking points have been developed to accompany the Support Needs Assessment slide deck.

Key messages

Slide 1: Title slide (Susan)

- Welcome everyone to the briefing session on the Support Needs Assessment. Thank you all for attending.
- For those I have not met before, my name is Susan Moore, I am the Branch Manager for Co-design Branch.

Slide 2: Acknowledgement of Country (Susan)

- Before we begin, I would like to start with an Acknowledgement of Country.
In the heart of this land, so old and so wise
We pay our respect to the Ngunnawal people, who watch over the skies
Past, present and emerging - we honour their tales
As we live, love and learn, where our spirit prevails
In this place we call home, where our hearts sing along,
We celebrate together, united and strong.
We acknowledge their land

We acknowledge the sky

We acknowledge their connections to the years gone by

In peaceful community, we gather and grow,

Learning from one another, with our hearts all aglow.

Slide 3: Housekeeping (Susan)

Housekeeping and accessibility

- While we'd love to see and hear from everyone here today, with the number of attendees we have online, **we will instead be using the Q&A function in teams for you** to ask questions.

Q&A function

- If you're on a Desktop computer, you can access the **Q&A by clicking on the Q&A icon** in the top menu bar.
- If you're connected through a Browser, please click the **3 dots in the top** menu bar and select Q&A.
- If you're using your mobile, tap the 3 dots at the bottom of your screen and select Q&A.
- If you're using a Screen reader, navigate to move actions (ALT+Q) and select Q&A.

You can:

- Ask a question using the 'Ask a question' icon – it's a speech bubble with a question mark in the Q&A panel.
- Questions will be moderated only to ensure sensitive information isn't posted. Your questions will appear but may have a slight delay so please be patient.
- **I want to acknowledge that there will not be time to answer each and every question, as hard as we try.**
- And some questions we simply don't have answers to at this point in time.
- You're welcome to post your questions and comments in the chat as well. We know the chat has been the primary channel most people are familiar with, so please feel free to continue using it.
- I want to highlight that this is just one of many conversations we are having. It won't be the last time we engage with you.
- If you have any technical difficulties throughout the session, please email us at

647E(d) - certain operations of

@ndis.gov.au and one of our team members will help you.

Safety and Inclusion

- Let's commit to creating a safe and inclusive meeting.
- I want to ensure our meetings are a **safe and inclusive environment** where people can ask questions, share ideas and opinions without judgement.
- I will make sure everyone gets an **opportunity to have their say**, and I ask members to be considerate of who is in the room, their experience, and treat each other with respect.
- Please focus on respectful communication, including in the chat, so everyone feels comfortable sharing and participating.
- If you need to step away, take the time to do so.
- Some presentations **may evoke personal or emotional responses**, which some individuals may find distressing.
- The **NDIA offers an Employment Assistance Program (EAP) through TELUS services to staff, and this service is also available to all working group members.**
- To contact a TELUS health clinician, **you can call anytime, including after hours, weekends, and public holidays.**
- If you are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping, support is available through Lifeline anytime for confidential telephone crisis support.
- My team will share these details in the chat.

Introduction:

- Today, **Clair Wheeler, acting General Manager** for the Co-design and Engagement Division will briefly touch on the Participant Pathway and then move to focusing on the Support Needs Assessment.
- Some of you may already be familiar with this content or have seen parts of it in previous sessions.
- We'll have time for questions at the end of the briefing. We'll start by responding to the questions submitted in advance and then move to questions in the Q&A function and the chat.
- If time permits, we'll also open the floor for verbal questions from those joining us today.
- Please note that we have only one hour for this session. We'll do our best to address all questions, but if we run out of time, we will take any unanswered questions on notice and share responses after the briefing.
- I will now **handover to Clair** to commence the presentation. Welcome Clair.

Planning overview (Clair). talk to new planning pathway.

- **Brief intro from Clair**
- Good morning everyone, Clair speaking. For those who do not know me, I am Clair Wheeler, Acting General Manager Co-design and Engagement Division. Today I am going to provide a briefing on the Support Needs Assessment.
- Firstly, we will just briefly touch on the new planning pathway.
- There are **four stages** that make up the new way of planning:
 - Preparing for a Support Needs Assessment
 - We know participants want:
 - to **prepare** for their support needs assessment
 - **speak with someone** who can answer their questions
 - a range of different **resources and tools** to help them.
 - So in this first stage, participants can expect to know:
 - what's changing - for them and how it impacts them
 - Why
 - When
 - And
 - What they need to do
 - The Support Needs Assessment
 - Participants have told us that having someone to talk to about change really matters. That's why we will get in touch before they complete a support needs assessment.
 - We are committed to helping participants transition to the new way of planning by providing information and advice BEFORE the support needs assessment takes place.
 - When the participant books their appointment they will have the right information about:
 - **What** the support needs assessment is
 - **How** it is completed

- **Why** participants need to complete it
- **Who will** do the assessment
- **What to expect** on the day
- And **How** participants can prepare
- Participants can ask questions at any time and get clarification.
- We will confirm the next steps and that the participant is ready for the assessment.
- I'll go into more detail in some of the next slides about the SNA meeting.
- The 3rd stage is Building or receiving a plan
 - Participants will talk with the NDIA at this third stage, to finalise their NDIS plan.
 - **The NDIA:**
 - explains their budget and its connection to the Supports Need Assessment
 - explains the plan
 - explains what is next
 - **The participant:**
 - asks questions about their plan
 - confirms preference for how the plan is set-up
 - receives their plan.
- Using a plan - all participants are offered a plan implementation meeting
 - Participants can receive support to use their NDIS plan. This will be really important in the participant's first new framework plan because there will be more flexible supports and the participant will need to make choices about what to buy with their flexible funding, against s10 NDIS supports list and what is written in their plan. This is a big change.
 - At this stage, the participant:
 - Considers how to use their funding to pursue their goals.
 - Connects with providers and establishes service agreements.
 - Manages their budget.

Slide 4: Delivering Support Needs Assessments (Clair)

- I'm going to go back to the support needs assessment and focus on that in this next section of our discussion.
- A Support Needs Assessment (SNA) will be part of the Agency's new way of planning from mid-2026.
- The assessment will collect information from participants, families and carers about participants' holistic disability support needs. This information will be used to create more flexible budgets and plans.
- This change responds to the NDIS Review recommendation 3; to provide a fairer and more consistent participant pathway.
- The Agency has committed to working with participants and the disability sector to design and implement this change.

Slide 5: What is the Support Needs Assessment tool (Clair)

- In August last year, the Agency procured a license to use the I-CAN, the Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs.
- It is a support needs assessment tool for identifying support needs of people with disability aged 16 and over.
- SNA tool is developed in Australia, by the Centre for Disability Studies.
- SNA tool will form the basis of the NDIS support needs assessment.
- The tool is based on World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and aligns with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- The tool's development - since its original release in 1998 - is based on extensive research that has produced a consistent, reliable and comprehensive system of identifying and classifying support needs for all disability types.
- It maps support needs across 12 domains including complex needs.
- It's important to clarify **what the tool is not**.
 - The tool does not use any pre-coded logic to determine participant outcomes.
 - It does not replace human judgement with automated determinations.

Slide 6: SNA tool for NDIA (Clair)

- Part of the procurement of I-CAN includes research projects that will be jointly delivered by the University of Melbourne and Centre for Disability Studies. This group is also known as the 'consortium'.

- Over the next 5 years, we will develop and tailor I-CAN to meet the unique needs of the NDIS.
- The program of work to tailor the I-CAN will involve consultation with the disability community and disability sector.
- I-CAN v6 will form the basis of the NDIS support needs assessment. This will be different to the version of I-CAN currently used by practitioners in the NDIS market.
- The NDIS Support Needs Assessment will be made up of:
 1. A needs assessment using I-CAN v6 (to be modified for NDIS purposes)
 2. A PECQ (Personal, Environmental and Circumstances Questionnaire), and
 3. Additional assessments, if a participant has complex health needs.
- The I-CAN is just one part of a support needs assessment.
- Scope of work with University of Melbourne:
 - The NDIA has entered a 5-year contract with University of Melbourne which provides for:
 - A licence for the NDIA to use and customise the I-CAN for our purposes.
 - Services to support implementation of the tool in NDIA operations, including a workforce training and accreditation model.

Services to monitor, modify and continuously improve the tool over time to tailor it to specific NDIS cohorts.

Slide 7: How it's used (Clair)

- The I-CAN is delivered by a trained and accredited assessor who conducts a needs assessment in a way that is strengths based and person centred.
- This is done via a semi-structured interview that can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the participant, including for specific disability and cultural needs.
- A participant's goals will inform the administration of the I-CAN, which delivered online, as is the case for the Disability Support for Older Australians (DSOA) Program, or in person.
- Part of the assessment is to capture what the person 'can do' using strengths'-based language. At the same time, the assessor will identify the level and frequency of support required to meet the person's needs. This is captured using a scoring model as part of the I-CAN.

Slide 8: Comprehensive assessment of support needs (Clair)

- The I-CAN is structured into 12 domains, each with 4 sub-domains (except for 'physical health' which has 10).
- The 9 'activity and participation domains' are based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)'s activity and participation chapters. The behaviours of concern, mental and emotional health, and physical health domains have been added to ensure the full range of support needs are captured.

Slide 9: Assessment tool scoring scales (Clair)

- Domains in the I-CAN are scored by frequency and intensity of support to provide a complete picture of needs and strengths.
- For each sub-domain, the assessor would use information from the semi-structured interview to score participant support needs using zero to 5 point scales:
- The frequency of support scale asks how often support is needed.
- The level of support scale asks how much support is needed.
- These two scales are added to give a zero to 10 combined support intensity scale within each domain.
- The scores are essential to identify which life areas a participant requires disability supports, and the intensity of that need and to also possibly identify whether targeted modules are required.
- In each domain, qualitative information is recorded in the form of 'I can statements' or strengths-based statements that serve to:
 - Document the discussions
 - Explain the assessor's reasoning for the scoring
 - Identify factors impacting the scoring (e.g. use of assistive technology)
 - Identify whether targeted modules are required.
- After the assessor completes the assessment, they will submit the report, along with the PECQ and Targeted Modules to a plan delegate who will review it.
- We are currently co-designing the summary SNA Report.

Slide 10: Support needs assessment overview (Clair)

- The support needs assessment using I-CAN will apply to participants aged 16 or older.
- It will assess the disability support needs that arise from the participant's **eligible impairments**, meaning the impairments for which the participant meet the NDIS access requirements.

- As part of a comprehensive assessment, a participant will meet with an assessor to undergo a needs assessment using I-CAN, and complete a Personal and Environmental Circumstances Questionnaire, or PECQ.
- The PECQ will collect important background information, and embed questions that may trigger the agency to provide additional safeguarding supports.
- **This comprehensive assessment will take place at a time, place and modality that suits the participant.**
- If a participant requires more complex supports that cannot be assessed using the I-CAN and PECQ, they will undertake an additional targeted assessment. This will happen at another time.
- After a support needs assessment has been completed, the assessor will check in with the participant to ensure their support needs have been accurately captured.
- The participant will get their SNA report before their plan meeting so they can ask to correct any errors.
- The assessor will submit the needs assessment to a plan delegate.

How we use the SNA report to build a budget:

- *The information collected through the support needs assessment is translated into a total reasonable and necessary budget. The method to do this will be set out in the NDIS rules.*
- *All participants will have a support needs assessment meeting, which has three parts: completing the I-CAN tool a discussion about their personal and living circumstances targeted assessments - if the participant needs more complex supports like assistive technology, behaviour support, home modifications or disability related health supports. Not all participants will need to do the targeted assessments.*
- *The 3 parts of the needs assessment will work together to allow the assessor to build a complete picture of the participant's NDIS support needs.*
- *The I-CAN v6 tool is designed to measure the level and frequency of support need across 12 domains of a person's life. Certain scores in certain domains of the I-CAN indicate that a participant needs certain types of supports.*
- *For example, the 'level' of support need in the personal care domain likely indicates whether the participant needs in-home and community support. The 'frequency' score can also identify how many times per day this type of support is required.*
- *The participant's plan will be developed by using the method in the NDIS rules to assess the participant's NDIS Support needs and allocate an amount of funding to different Support Item Groupings (SIGs) in the new Plan. There are 16 SIGs.*

- *An example of a SIG includes In-home and Community Supports, Therapy, Home Modifications*
- *The NDIS supports the participant can buy with their plan are outlined in the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits (PAPL). There are 620 individual support items funded by the NDIS. These are grouped into the 16 individual Support Item Groupings (SIGs).*
- *The Agency is working with the Department to outline and describe the funding method. The NDIS Act requires that it is transparent and set out in the NDIS Rules.*

Targeted Assessments:

- Targeted modules are required to assess specific disability support needs for a participant when it cannot be sufficiently assessed using the core assessment or PECQ.
- Targeted modules are required for Disability Related Health Supports, new Assistive Technology, Home Modifications and Specialist Disability Accommodation.
- Targeted modules will be completed by referring to external information provided to the NDIA by a suitably qualified individual (e.g. allied health professional).

Slide 11: What is the PECQ? (Clair)

- The PECQ is being redesigned for the new way of planning. The purpose of the PECQ is to:
 - Collect additional information about participants' personal and environmental circumstances to support our understanding of their support needs. This includes information on living arrangements, employment and/or learning, and informal supports.
 - Integrate into the support needs assessment, alongside the I-CAN. We don't want participants to feel like they are completing two separate assessments, or to feel that they are repeating information through the participant pathway.
 - Be suitable for a range of participant groups, including First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse participants.
- We expect to talk through the PECQ at various points in the pathway, including the support needs assessment meeting.

Slide 12: Design of the Support Needs Assessment (Clair)

- We are continuing to consult with participants, families, carers and the broader disability community to make sure that the Support Needs Assessment will work for everyone.

- A total of 67 participants were included in Design Hub activities between October 2025 and January 2026.
- Participants have been engaged in a range of activities including:
 - 12 online focus group sessions
 - 14 one to one online interviews
 - a two-day in person workshop with 12 participants
 - 11 1:1 in person interviews.
- Participants were selected for these activities based on criteria to ensure diversity across geographic location, gender, disability type and relationship to the NDIS (e.g. participant or nominee), as well as their interest and availability.
- In 2026, participants will help us get ready for new framework planning by:
 - Joining Design Hub activities to test:
 - the SNA experience
 - staff guidance including scripts, decision-making guidance
 - tools to implement a flexible plan
 - participant communications products to inform of upcoming changes.
 - Being part of simulated SNA interviews to help support needs assessors get accredited to use the I-CAN tool.
 - In January and February 2026, 21 participants from the Participant Reference Group took part in the first tranche of accreditation interviews conducted by NDIA assessor staff.
 - Accreditation sessions will continue through 2026 as more assessors learn how to use the I-CAN tool in line with the staff workforce transition plan.
 - Validating the budget method used to develop a flexible budget using the outcome of the support needs assessment.
- We expect to need around 450 participants to work with us in the Design Hub, accreditation sessions, and validation sessions between now and July 2026.

Consultation on the new plan and the SNA report (for background TPs only – not for this presentation)

- *We consulted close to 60 participants and sector representatives in November 2025, seeking their views on the format, order of information and language used in the new framework plan template. We incorporated this feedback into the new framework plan template, building on previous adjustments made from plan template codesign in 2024 and further plan template consultation in mid-2025. The latest version of the new framework plan template will be used in plan simulation discussions in the Design Hub sessions.*
- *Additionally, we consulted with 27 participants and nominees over 3 sessions in January 2026, seeking their views on the format, order of information and language used in the SNA report template. We incorporated their feedback into the draft SNA report template which will be tested with participants as part of SNA simulation activities with participants in the Design Hub. We'll also undertake further consultation with participants and sector representatives in March through participant review panels and NDIA co-design and advisory groups.*
- *The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing is also sharing the report template with states and territories as part of the consultation on NDIS rules.*
- *Feedback and findings from these activities will be considered as part of ongoing improvements to the SNA process and report.*
- *We will co-design a summary version of the SNA report and an easy read version.*

Slide 15: Question and Answer (Susan)

- Thank you, Clair for that presentation. Hope was useful to clarify / confirm some information.
- Won't be the last information session
- Series of public webinars. Starting up Reform Town Halls. 17 March (transition plan); 31 March (SNA validation)
- We will now move to the Q&A.
- As mentioned earlier **we will start with the questions we received in advance.**
- **May not be time to answer each and every question, as hard as we try.**
- **But will address as QoN**
- Start with questions submitted earlier
- Move to chat – please use Q&A icon / function. Or chat if easier.
- If time permits we will open the floor for members to ask questions.
- ****PMR team will forward questions to Susan to read out****
- ****Susan to ask the question individually and allow time for Clair to respond****

Questions in advance

1. Slide 9: Comprehensive assessment of support needs (12 domains and sub-domains)

Please give us some samples of the questions that would be asked in the core (ICAN) assessment. I am particularly interested in community, social and civic life domains and the Interpersonal interactions and relationships areas?

- The SNA tool is administered as a semi-structured interview, so there are no specific questions. Because the tool is a support needs assessment, the language used by the assessor is asking systematically about the participant's circumstances and support needs, and is tailored to the participant's needs in the assessment process. This is different to the language used in a functional assessment.
- The approach involves using open questions, active listening and adapting the interview to reflect the participant's responses and needs, and gain understanding of the type and frequency of support a participant may need.
- For example: 'Walk me through your day'...or 'tell me more about...'
- The approach is intended to support a person-centred approach, building rapport and trust more quickly and leads conversation in a strengths based way, identifying supports to enable participants participation for domains/subdomains (can do), rather than identifying deficits (can't do).
- SNA Assessors will be provided with training, guidance and support and be accredited with regard to their competence in administering the SNA tool.
- For each of the domains and subdomains, the SNA Assessor will ask relevant questions on the domains and subdomains described in the tool and scoring manual to be able to assign a score for both the type of support required and how often the support is required.
- The questions begin broadly on the topic and use the participants responses to inform subsequent questions.
- The Tools & Scoring Manual sets out the support areas that are to be covered. This keeps the assessment discussion focussed on the support needs of the participant and that the same areas are consistently and holistically considered for each participant.

- As an example, for the domain, Community, Social and Civic Life, the following subdomains and areas of support needs are expected to be addressed.
 - Money & Economic Life - Supports related to the management of money and finances including saving and budgeting, making minor and major purchases using cash or a card, and paying bills. This includes financial management by another person, including a government agency such as the Public Trustee.
 - Community Life - Supports related to accessing and engaging in the community (e.g. borrowing books from the library, joining a club, engaging in religious or spiritual activities, participating in other activities or interests of choice)
 - Leisure & Recreation - Supports related to engaging in leisure, play or recreational activities such as puzzles, television, music, reading, craft.
 - Advocacy - Supports related to advocating for the person's needs and rights (including citizen and self-advocacy), or engaging in political and civic life activities (e.g. voting)

2. Slide 12: What is the PECQ?

Can you provide some examples of questions in the PECQ?

- An example of a question is:
 - Q. Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?
 - Working in open employment
 - Working in a supported employment service
 - Self-employed
 - Not currently employed but plan to work
 - Not currently employed and do not plan to work

Or:

- Q. (If selected A, B, or C) On average, how many hours do you work per week?
 - Less than 10 hours
 - 10 to 20 hours
 - 20 to 30 hours
 - More than 30 hours
- These two questions are good examples of how the PECQ collects information that is not covered in the tool but are important for assessing funding eligibility.

- When administering the SNA, assessors will be able to flow from these topics into domains like community, social, and civic life, learning and applying knowledge, and life long learning.

3. Can you please clarify the qualifications and expertise of the initial cohort of assessors?

- The first 80 Support Needs Assessors will be trained and accredited by the Centre for Disability Studies. To complete this program staff members, require:
 - A tertiary qualification in allied health, OR
 - Recognition of their qualification and disability experience by the Centre for Disability Studies. This could be the case for a staff member whose allied health qualification is not on the Centre for Disability Studies list.
- All remaining Support Needs Assessors will be trained and accredited using the Agency's training and accreditation program developed with the Centre for Disability Studies. To complete this program, staff members require:
 - A tertiary qualification in allied health, OR
 - Completion of the Foundational (bridging) program developed by the Centre for Disability Studies. These staff will also be assessed as having the required skills, capabilities and experience for the Support Needs Assessor role.

Back pocket - possible Q&As

1. What is the scope of the NDIA's work with the University of Melbourne and Centre for Disability Studies? And what is in scope to consult/codesign?

- The NDIA has entered a 5-year contract with University to Melbourne.
- The University of Melbourne and the Centre for Disability Studies will support the NDIA to monitor, refine and continuously improve the support needs assessment over time.
- The contract provides for:
 - A licence for the NDIA to use and customise the I-CAN for our purposes.
 - Services to support implementation of the tool in NDIA operations, including a workforce training and accreditation model.
- Services to monitor, modify and continuously improve the tool over time to tailor it to specific NDIS cohorts. This will be achieved through:
 - Quality assurance, quarterly reporting, support and strategic advice
 - Analytics and qualitative data integration, and tool development and modification

- Lived experience and community insights – such as interviews, focus groups. This will include a lived experience insights team who will engage with the disability community to understand how the support needs assessment process – including the I-CAN as it is adapted for the NDIS – is working in practice
- There will be opportunity for the disability sector to provide feedback about their lived experience to influence this work through interviews, focus groups and other feedback loops. This includes gathering feedback from participants with different disability types, people living in remote areas, First Nations participants, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- The NDIA will also continue to work with the disability community to refine the SNA and its administration for different NDIS cohorts over the long term.
- Findings from these activities may lead to changes to the I-CAN tool, how the SNA is delivered, or the guidance and resources provided to assessors and participants

2. Why doesn't the assessor use existing reports on my record?

- The new tool means most participants won't need to bring extra reports.
 - Our aim is to make the process comprehensive and consistent, so participants won't need to provide as much additional information or supporting evidence.
3. There may be some targeted areas where additional reports may be required, we will make sure participants know in advance of the assessment.

What is the testing showing us?

- Since September 2025, the NDIA has undertaken a program of desktop assessments of the new SNA. These assessments are being conducted by dedicated internal workforce. The purpose of the desktop assessment is to inform refinements to the SNA and budget method to inform workforce requirements.
- To date, the development of the SNA and budget method has been supported by the independent review. This includes an **independent technical review** of the budget method and an external Professional Advisory Panel (PAP). The PAP is comprised of clinical and academic experts in disability and health, as well as actuarial analysis and economics.
- Practice assessments are being conducted through the NDIA's **Design Hub**. This is helping to inform key elements of new way of planning, including participant experience and service design.
- Ongoing continuous improvement of the SNA will be support through the NDIA's 5 year partnership with the University of Melbourne and Centre for Disability Studies. Findings

from this work may lead to changes in the I-CAN tool, how the SNA is delivered, or the guidance and resources provided to assessors and participants.

- This work is being established in connection with the broader evaluation of new way of planning being led by the NDIA
- The NDIA will continue working closely with the disability community to modify and improve the SNA for different NDIS cohorts of participants over-time.

Q: How has the core (I-CAN) tool been culturally validated?

The disability community is helping to design and test the new planning approach through workshops, forums and a Design Hub.

Over the past year, more than 100 engagements involving 7,000 participants, families, providers and other stakeholders have helped shape these changes.

The Design Hub tests planning activities with participants who have registered in the [New Framework Planning Pool](#).

The Design Hub is working with a diverse cohort of participants to ensure the assessment process is fair, equitable and culturally safe for all NDIS participants.

We will continue to work with a diversity of participants to refine the tool.

Q: Who will be responsible for calibrating participant responses across the 3 assessment areas (i.e. combining I-CAN, PECQ and targeted assessments).

- The NDIA assessor will prepare an assessment report based on the details gathered from the core assessment and the PECQ (and targeted assessment if applicable).

Q: What is the proposed budget method?

A participant's reasonable and necessary budget must be determined by applying information contained in the needs assessment report in accordance with a method set out in the rules.

The new approach will create more flexible budgets compared to current plans which are based on individual supports.

Most funding for supports will be in a **flexible** budget. Participants will use this part of their budget to buy the NDIS supports that meet their needs.

This flexibility gives participants more **choice** and leads to better outcomes while keeping the Scheme participant-centred.

Some plans may contain **stated** supports, and participants must use that funding only for those supports. For example, if a participant has funding for behaviour supports, they must spend it on behaviour supports.

Stated supports will be the exception, not the rule. They are used to manage risk and make sure funding is only spent on those specific supports.

The NDIS rules, which are now under development by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, will determine how budgets are allocated. The rules will outline:

- steps taken to determine a budget
 - types of supports to be stated in a plan
 - funding periods approved by the NDIA delegate
 - any restrictions applied to the flexible budget and how restrictions are determined

the requirements for receiving or buying NDIS supports.

Q: Am I entitled to a review if I do not agree with my budget / plan?

Participants will still be able to request a reassessment or variation of their plan if their circumstances change.

Participants continue to have the right to request a review of their plan, including through the Administrative Review Tribunal.

Participants can:

Request an internal review of their plan decision

Request an external review through the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) if they are not satisfied with the internal review.

A delegate cannot change the contents of the support needs assessment report.

A delegate can arrange a replacement support needs assessment if the assessment process isn't completed correctly.

Q: Who will be in the first cohort to transition?

- The aim is to start the new way of planning from mid-2026 and roll out in stages.

Children will not be part of the first stage of rollout. The first group will be adults aged 18 and over.

Current NDIS plans stay in place until participants move to the new way of planning.

The full rollout is expected to take several years.

Participants will get clear and timely information before they move.

Staff will have guidance and training to support participants through the process.

Staff and the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) will be consulted on any changes to roles and work practices.

Participants, providers, partners and staff can give feedback throughout the rollout.

Current NDIS plans remain in place.

Participants can keep using their current plans and supports.

No one will move to the new way of planning until they have clear information and support for the new process.

Q: When will the community get more information about all of this?

- We are stepping up public webinars and reform town halls.
- You are invited.
- See details on NDIS Engage!

Final Remarks and close (Susan)

- I'd like to thank each of you for your contribution today.
- We will also develop a meeting summary that you can share with your networks, and we will publish to the NDIS website.
- I'd like to thank Clair, our presenter for joining us today.
- And thank you to all members for contributing to today's meeting and discussions.



SNA and ICAN briefing (AUSNAA1703A - Remote Captioning)
05 Mar 2026 11:00 AM

Ai-Media Transcript -SNA_AND_ICAN_BRIEFING (English)
MAR_05_2026

NDIA — SNA and I-CAN briefing

SPEAKER:

It is wonderful to see so many people online this morning. George is just coming in. Good morning everyone. It is beautiful to see you all. Please don't be shy, put your cameras on if you feel comfortable to do so. This is a really exciting opportunity for all co-design working groups to come together.

It is probably one of the few times we have done it, so this is very good and it is wonderful to see you all today. We will be talking about the participant pathway, just very briefly. Thank you for coming together, I just want to give a quick acknowledgement to Country. My name is Susan more, you have not met you already I am branch manager of Co- design. I am based on Ngunnawal Country, that is Canberra. I have been given permission by the local Ngunnawal Elders, to present the Acknowledgement of Country in Language. (Speaks in Language) this is Ngunnawal Country, today we are all meeting on Ngunnawal Country, or I am coming to you from Ngunnawal Country. We acknowledge and pay respects to our Elders, past and present. Welcome everyone, special welcome to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people on the line, and allies.

Please do share where you are beaming in from this morning, in the chat.

A little bit of housekeeping before we go on. We will bring up a side of housekeeping. Let us commit to having a safe and inclusive meeting, a safe and inclusive environment where we can all talk and share our ideas. Where we will have the opportunity to raise questions. I want to note that some of the content may evoke personal or emotional responses. If you need to pull out, or pause, please feel free to do so.

Please also note that NDIA has a TELUS Health service that is available to all working group members. So if you need to connect with them, reach out, let us know, we are very happy to help you connect with that.

As I started out saying, we will hear about the participant pathway and a little bit about the assessment process. We will hear from Clair Wheeler, the acting general manager, very shortly, and after the presentation we will have some time for question and answer. We will have to stop at 11:55 AM on the dot. We have to do get to another meeting and we apologise for that. When we get to the Q&A time, I will direct you to the Q&A function in the Teams chat. At the top, if you are on a desktop computer, at the top revenue can see a Q&A icon. Please use that if you can.

If you can't, and it is too hard, you can still post questions in the chat. We will do our best to get all of the questions, but I thank you, if you have given your

questions in advance. We will start with questions you have given us in advance, and then we will move to other questions that come in off the floor.

So let me introduce, she needs no introduction, Clair Wheeler, the acting general manager for co-design and engagement division. Over to you.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Susan, Clair speaking. Lovely to be with you this morning, I joining from Country in Geelong.

We are going to run through the new participant pathway, that sets the scene for the Support Needs Assessment meeting, and some more detail about how the agency is working with the University of Melbourne and the Centre for the Disability Studies to incorporate the I-CAN tool into our Support Needs Assessment.

We will pick up questions but we get into the pack.

You will know that in the middle of this year we plan to start delivering a new way of planning, you may have heard that called New Framework Planning, that is what the NDIS Eight calls it. We will start to use a Support Needs Assessment as a way to identify people's disability Support Needs Assessment and develop their necessary budget in the plan. It is responding to the recommendation in the NDIS Review to provide a much fairer, much more consistent way of planning, and to remove the confrontational and stressful conversations in developing a line by line plan, which of course is what we do now.

I will give you an overview about four different stages of that new way of planning. There is four different steps that the participant will go through. The first is to prepare for their first Support Needs Assessment. The second is the support needs assessment itself, the third is getting the plan and understanding the reasonable and necessary budget, and talking through some of the other settings in the plan. And then they fourth stages using the plan. The plan will be set out a little differently, funding will be more flexible than it is at the moment.

I will go back to the first step. I really do want to call out our participant experience co-design working group, who have really informed, and given us great feed back, and helped us to shape the experience I will talk through. Lots of work, many hours of discussion, and collaboration, so thanks to all of you who are on the call.

What we know is that participants want to speak with someone who can really help them prepare for their Support Needs Assessment. They want a range of different resources and tools to help them prepare, and to understand what they need to do, and when. So in this first stage participants can expect to find out what is changing. How it will impact them, why it is happening, when it is going to happen, and what they need to do.

There is a range of ways that people will be able to get that information. There will be staff who can talk people through, some people might prefer to get that information from the website as well. So lots of different ways that people can get the right information, and there will be webpages, and intentionally tools and resources that people can use as well.

Second stage, the Support Needs Assessment meeting. Again, once you have booked your support needs assessment, and the right information, and you really understand what is happening, the support needs assessment is a really person-centred and strengths-based conversation to understand people's particular disability-related support needs. It is a semistructured conversation which means there is no set questions or answers. But the tool we are going to use, the I-CAN tool, will guide the discussion and help the assessor to understand the participant's daily needs. We will make sure that is a really comprehensive conversation. There will be a couple of other elements to the meeting, and I will talk about this in much more detail in the following slides, because that is really most of the information that we will give you this morning.

There will be a discussion about the participant's particular living situation, and daily life. And then for some people, there will be some more targeted assessments supports that might be more complex. Things like high cost assistive technology, or disability-related health supports.

At the end of that assessment the participant will get a record. There is a Support Needs Assessment report. That report is used to help build the participant's reasonable and necessary budget. Then there is a conversation with the person, the delegate, who makes the decision to approve the plan. This is the third stage in our process, so getting the plan. It will have told us they want to talk to the person who approves that plan. So there is a conversation to run through the reasonable and necessary budget is. What the different categories, we will call them support information, and groupings. And it is really what we would call categories in your plan today.

Said the planner, the delegate, will be able to work through with the participant what funding is in each funding of the plan. And also talk to people about things like how long the plan is going to be. Funding periods. And pick up any particular risks or issues to talk through with the participant. They will also talk to them about plan management types as well.

Then the fourth stage is using the flexible plan. There will continue to be a plan implementation meeting. And the person who is going to help the participant to implement the plan will really talk through things like the participant's goals, what they want to achieve from the funding, and help meet the things in their daily life that we have picked up in the Support Needs Assessment. So exactly as we do now. An implementation conversation. The thing to say is that there will be more support to help people implement a much more flexible plan, because it will be... In the same way it is now. There is flexible funding. And it is really important to make sure that the things the participant buys are on the list of approved NDIS supports.

So, more support to help set up, and the first time that the participant uses the plan.

I will get into more detail about the Support Needs Assessment. I think they're going back to slide four. Thank you.

We have talked a little bit about Support Needs Assessments response to the recommendation in the NDIS Review. The principal is really about being much

fairer and creating equity, and much more consistency and what people can expect in their NDIS budget. And then we will just move to the next slide, where we talk about what the support needs assessment tool is.

The tool forms the core of the Support Needs Assessment meeting. It is not the only bit. But it is the core that is really going to guide the Support Needs Assessment. And the agency has bought a license to use the I-CAN tool from the Centre for Disability Studies, that is part of the University of Sydney. The tool has been in use for quite a number of years out in the world. It looks at 12 domains or areas of a person's life, including complex needs. And it is validated and appropriate for all disability types. It is really important to say it is not validated for children who are aged under 16. So this first round of Support Needs Assessment's for the middle of 2026 and beyond, one not involve children. Really important to say that right at the start.

What we're doing is working with the University of Melbourne and the Centre for Disabilities Studies to customise the tool and implemented specifically for the NDIS. It is really important, before we move on, to be clear about what that tool is not. It is not an algorithm. It does not use any pre-coded logic or program to predetermine or preload outcomes of the Support Needs Assessment. And it does not replace human judgement with any automated decisions or determinations. So the port needs assessor gets guided through by the tool, but absolutely, the Support Needs Assessment is the person recording the conversation.

The procurement of that tool, and we worked last year through a Commonwealth procurement, really important to say that as part of an approach to market. And there are some research projects, and some work, that we will do with the University of Melbourne and the Centre for Disability Studies, to tailor that tool to meet the unique needs of the NDIS. It is a five-year contract, and that is really because it will take us around five years to transition all participants from the plans they are on now, to a New Framework Plan that is developed using a Support Needs Assessment. It will be a very gradual and deliberate assessment. We are certainly not starting by including every single person who is coming up for a plan review in the middle of this year.

We will start very small and then learn and grow over the next four to five years.

So the I-CAN tool is the basis of the Support Needs Assessment. It is made up of firstly the needs assessment conversation, which is guided by the I-CAN tool. It is also based on an environmental and circumstances questionnaire, that is called the PEC tool. And then there might be some additional assessments, if the person has got particularly complex support needs. As I said earlier some examples of that might be (unknown term) health supports.

The I-CAN tool will be used by a trained and accredited assessor. They will conduct the conversation in a strengths-based way, it is a really important point I might pick up a little later. It is a different way of considering what someone's support needs are. And we are really working through that at the moment in some of the testing and the participant consultation that we are doing.

So the I-CAN tool can be used either online or in person. The disability supports for older adults program has a range of ways, it can also be done over the phone.

It is not dependent upon a particular setting or way of completing it. So a really important part of using it is that the results are the same, whether or not you are face-to-face or on a video call, or over the phone. So that was really important.

It is a semistructured interview that is tailored to the particular needs of the participant. That might include their particular disability, or cultural needs. And the participant's goals will help the assessor to run through the I-CAN. So really being able to capture what the person can do using strength-based language. At the same time, the assessor will look at what support the person needs. But also, the level of support and the frequency of support that that person might need.

Next one.

There are 12 domains in the Support Needs Assessment conversation. I will read through them, they are on the slide. They are mobility, domestic life, self-care, community, social and civic life; communication, learning and applying knowledge, general tasks, and demands, lifelong learning, interpersonal interactions and relationships. Behaviours of concern, mental and emotional health, and physical health.

So they are based on the International classification of functioning disability and health and the behaviours of concern, mental and emotional health, and physical health domains have been added in developing the I-CAN to ensure the full range of support needs are captured.

Will move to the next one.

The domains in the I-CAN, the assessor will look at the frequency and the intensity of supports. That really helps to build a complete picture of the participant's needs and strengths. Each subdomain, there are some points underneath all of those 12 categories to talk through, and the assessor will use information from that conversation to understand if there is a support need. But also to score the support need, using a zero to five point scale. So in the intensity consideration, the assessor would think about whether the area is not relevant at all. The person might be independent and they don't need any support.

They might have what we would call managed independence in the tool, that means their needs are managed through using aids or equipment independently. Minor intensity is about whether the person needs some brief or minor support from another person. Moderate support needs, and intensity, are where someone might need a series of prompts or instructions, it might be reassurance or emotional support. All more regular supervision.

Can I get you all to please go on mute, because we are getting background noise. Thank you very much.

There is also an extensive need for support. That is really is someone would need support for the majority or for the entire task. Or of it is completed wholly for that person.

And then pervasive, which is technical language which the I-CAN tool uses, it is not plain English. The person needs direct support from two or more people.

Then the assessable think about frequency. So the conversation is going to be about the person's daily life, to really build the. So the frequency would be whether someone never needs that intensity of support. Occasionally, that might be less than once a week. Weekly, so one to six times per week. Daily, more frequently, which is four or more times per day. Or continuously, and that is where someone would need consistent support throughout the entire day.

So you can see the picture is starting to build of what supports the person needs. How much support they need. And then how often they need that support. And it is a really comprehensive conversation, if you imagine, against the 12 domains, and then there are areas underneath each of the 12. So a really person-centred and individualised conversation.

This is an overview of the whole Support Needs Assessment. The I-CAN tool is one part. And if you are reading through the slides you will see that that is highlighted as part A in the slide or in the accessible pack. There are two other areas in the Support Needs Assessment meeting, though. The first one is the personal and environmental circumstances questionnaire. This collect really important background and questions about may be particular safeguarding supports the person might need. It might be about their employment or their Home and Living situation. It might be about their informal supports.

So things that the I-CAN is not going to pick up because it is not directly about disability support needs, but it is about the context that that person lives that life, and who is around them.

And then some participants will need more targeted assessments for specific types of support. And again we might need to request for additional external reports and assessments, in the same way we do now. For example for a complex home modification, we need someone who is suitably qualified to recommend a technical home modification to someone's home or the premises. So some of those will continue.

A bit more about the PEC - that is something you might recognise already. We do already use an environmental and circumstances questionnaire in current plans. It is being redesigned a bit for New Framework Planning. And some of our co-design groups have really helped us to work through that. Our safeguarding co-design group have been really, really important in steering and guiding us on how we should approach some of those safeguarding and risk conversation.

It integrates into the Support Needs Assessment alongside the I-CAN. So it is a conversation-based assessment meeting, which the assessor will lead. They will really draw out the right answers to the particular questions and use that to build a whole of person assessment report. What we don't want to happen is the assessor to read out a list of I-CAN questions and then read out a list of environmental and circumstances questions. It is a free-flowing conversation, and the way we will train the assessors is to make sure they draw out the right information at each stage.

The questionnaire is going to be suited to a range of participant groups, that includes First Nations participants, and culturally and linguistically diverse participants.

Designing the Support Needs Assessment, and really helping to build the experience in line with what participants and our co-design working groups have told us that they want and need. Back in October of last year the agency established what we call the Design Hub, and it is working with participants directly to test and refine everything around the new way of planning. That includes Support Needs Assessment products, processes for three of the stages I talked about before.

So preparing someone for their Support Needs Assessment, the meeting itself, and then the resources that sit around the outside of that. And that might be a work book that helps you to capture your thoughts and think about the things that you particularly want to talk to the assessor about, and also things on our website, letters that we will send to people to help them understand what is coming, and when.

So the Design Hub working with people. We started working with a group of frontline staff who started to test the really early thinking and the participants experience, and early prototypes are things like letters, guidance, scripts, for the assessor to use. We have some great feedback from that. Really positive reactions to having a strengths-based conversation, and also to having a much more in-depth and person-centred conversation. We have got really good feedback about things that maybe were not quite so clear in the letters, or things that the assessor could have explained more clearly.

We talked to people about whether the conversation was too struck, or not structured enough. How they felt blown, whether it was too long, too short, and we have really improved and evolved our design and processes and results. So we are going back around for another round of Design Hub testing that has just started in February. This is where we test the second version of things, and we are really lucky now that we have the first round of credited assessors to use the I-CAN tool, they are people who will actually be Support Needs Assessment as in the new workforce. So we are being able to bring actual assessors, who are going through the training and learning how to use the tool, and the environmental circumstances questionnaire, and how to write the reports. Bringing them together with participants, and running what we call simulated support needs assessments.

So really positive, and it is really exciting to be kicking that off in much more detail.

I might pause there. That is a lot of information. I am really conscious that I have talk through a lot of things. So I want to make sure we allow enough time to go through some questions and pick up a little more of the detail. Or if you want me to go back over anything that I have missed.

Susan, I think I will hand over to you to take us through the questions, if that is OK.

SPEAKER:

100%. Thank you so much Clare for the presentation. I have been following the chat and some of the questions and answers in the Q&A icon. I can see that for some people the information there was something that you already knew. That is

OK. This is an opportunity, I guess, for us all to confirm our understanding, consolidate.

In our group, we have all got different levels of understanding. So Clare, thank you so much for setting that out for us again. And I want to just note to everyone online, this is not the one and only opportunity to get these kinds of information. There are a series of public webinars that we are running online. We are starting up reform town hall meetings, and all of you online will be invited to those. The first one commences shortly, on 17 March.

Information is available on these via NDIS Engage. If you want more information please ask. In the Q&A, thank you if you send us your questions earlier. We will start with questions sent in an advanced and then we will move to questions on chat. We may not get to them all. But we can follow up with you on specific questions.

Mindful of time. Clare, can you give us some examples of the questions that may be asked in the core assessment? That is in the I-CAN assessment. In particular around community, social and civic life domains.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Susan. Clare speaking. As I said earlier, because the Support Needs Assessment and the I-CAN is what we call a semistructured conversation, it is not a list of set questions that every single person answers. What the assessor does is tailor the conversation, and they have a real-life discussion with each participant, based on what they know about them. They will have a look at the person's record before they come into the meeting.

One of the really important things that is being worked through at the moment in the public consultation, about the NDIS rules, is what information the assessor will get access to, and will look at. So once that has landed, we can give you the specifics of that. But the principle that we have worked with, and that we have co-designed with our working group is that the assessor will go into that conversation having prepared, and having done some background reading, and having a look at that participant's life, disability, and circumstances.

So they will tailor the conversation. So there are no set questions. It may be that two participants with different needs, different disability types, and different lives will be asked different things. But they will all be asked about the 12 domains, the assessor might repeat back to someone that, "I don't think this domain is going to be relevant you, do you agree?" And in some cases the domain conversation will be longer. And for some it will be shorter.

It is more open questions and more a free-flowing conversation, which allows it to be person centred and individualise. It is very different to a functional assessment, which some people are used to. So that is one of our challenges, and one of the things we really want to work with participants to understand. How do we give you confidence going into the Support Needs Assessment? What it will be like. How can we help you prepare and think about the things that you want to make sure you talk to the assessor about. So that is the things we are testing in the Design Hub.

The assessor might ask tell me about your day... To me how you communicate. Me about what support you might need in a particular area. So we are working through with our participant Design Hub, think about how we can help people prepare for that, because it is not standard questions for everyone.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, I really similar question, this time with the personal and environmental circumstances questionnaire, or what we shorten to the PECQ. Can you give us some examples of the questions that will come up in the PECQ, and if I can add to that as well, is there any scoring in the PECQ? For example we saw in the presentation there was a scoring framework for the I-CAN, or the core tool. So can you give us a bit on that as well.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Susan, Clare speaking. So the PECQ is not scored. It is not a frequency, there is no one to five scale. But there are some questions that the assessor will ask about, for example, if we are thinking about employment and employment is one of the things that gets picked up in that questionnaire, how many hours per week do you work? For example.

There might be some different options, which is that they don't work at all, they work more than 30 hours... It is really trying to build a picture. And again, it is not set questions the person will read out word for word. There are different areas that the questionnaire will pick up. It is collecting information that the I-CAN does not necessarily pick up, that we need to understand.

It might be things we need to understand for plan management discussions, for example. It might be about picking up participant risk, or particular safeguards. Again, I say hours safeguarding co-design working group have really helped to design the approach to the questionnaire.

SPEAKER:

Thank you. Thank you very much. We will move on to questions about the core assessment tool, or what we refer to as the I-CAN tool, which we, the agency, have cured the license for from the University of Melbourne.

So the core tool, or I-CAN all, can you tell us a bit more about how the tool has been, or will be validated? Validated for cultural safety. Also, validated I suppose, validated for complex needs. And for fluctuating needs. Just as a bit of context, there is some discussion in the chat, some concern that some disability cohorts, especially autistic, sensory, rare diseases as well, these may not be picked up sufficiently by I-CAN. So tell us about the validation.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Susan, Clare speaking. The important point is the I-CAN tool is an external tool that has been validated over many years by the Centre for Disability Studies and the sector. There has been an awful lot of work that has gone into it before the agency has bought a license for it. It is being used for First Nations people, and for people with a range of complexities.

We have arranged with the supplier that we will tailor the tool for the specific needs of the NDIS. One of the really important things is making sure that we meet the commitments we make in the scheme to working in a culturally safe

way with First Nations participants. And working with lots of different cohorts, and involving participants and how we design and roll things out in the scheme.

So we will work with the sector and the Centre For Disability Studies to get feedback, and we will get feedback from people using it. People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background, and there absolutely are opportunities to continuously improve and tailor it over time. I'm trying to think of a good example, it might be a basic one. But maybe we will identify that we need to ask an additional question, or maybe there is a particular domain that when we look at how it is being tailored for a reasonable and necessary, and against the things that come up in planning, that we need to change.

It really allows us to get a good understanding of quality, to assure the experience and to make sure we talk to everyone after their support needs assessment to understand what the experience was. It is a really important part of designing and delivering new framework planning, is to look at what we thought would happen, is it happening, and other things that we didn't expect. We will make sure we have things in place to respond where there are unintended outcomes for things that we really want to look at in more detail.

The base of the tool, I really want to assure people that the people who are in that first group of people to move across in the middle of this year will absolutely get a tool that works. We are not saying we don't think it is any good, it is validated, we have tested that when we procured the license and entered into the contracts. The work that we will do over the next five years is really about tailoring and really continuously improving, which is the approach we take to lots of things in the NDIS.

SPEAKER:

Thank you very much, for explaining in detail, and feeling for you on the spot doing a great job. Everyone online doing a great job as well. We will keep going with the questions. If you are able to put your questions into the chat, please do so. It will just make my job a bit easier so I can group questions together, so we can get through the questions a bit quicker.

Clair, back to you. Grouping a few questions here, again, around the assessment process. There are concerns that through an assessment process, a participant might not do their best on the day. Questions here are how can we really trust what an assessor will take away from the meeting and report about me, and score me? Can a participant or will a participant be able to view their draft report before it is finalised? Just to check back that the information is accurate and correct. Just another one, people have different communications needs - would it be possible for a participant to do an assessment in writing, for example?

Thank you, Susan. I will take the writing in first and the answer to that is no. The reason for that is because it is a semistructured conversation, it sounds like jargon but I am going to say a person-centred conversation. It doesn't allow the assessor to follow up and ask questions about particular things. So not in writing, but there are options to do it over the phone or in video call or in Teams or in person. Lots of different ways.

I have completely forgotten part one and part two, can you ask me again? I'm terrible at multipart questions.

SPEAKER:

I'm trying to be efficient. It is really around whether a participant will be able to view their their draft report before it is finalised. Just to make sure it is accurate.

SPEAKER:

Perfect. There are two areas where we will check with the participant. The first is that the assessor will check as they go, and at the meeting they will have a little playback and repeat back to the person the things that they have talked about to make sure that they have understood things correctly. Then, the participant will see a copy of the assessment report before they get their plan. I know lots of people have talked to us about this. What the delegate will do when they approved the plan is to take the assessment report and use that to develop the plan. The participant experience working group and many other participants have talked to us about how important it is for the participant to see that report before it goes to the delegate to develop the plan.

The participant will get a copy of the assessment report, and the purpose of that so that they can correct any errors. Again, one of the really important rules that is out for consultation at the moment is when the delegate, the person who approves the plan, when they need to order a new assessment, replacement assessment, because either the participant has concerns of the delegate has concerns or it hasn't met the quality standards - that is all going to be set out in the NDIS rules. Certainly participants can tell us if they don't think the report is correct. The delegate will also check it as well to make sure it meets particular standards and at that point, it is used to develop a reasonable and necessary budget. So there are some reasonable and necessary checkpoints.

SPEAKER:

Thank you. We are getting to time. We have three minutes left and I will ask you that last question. Then I will come back in and close. I don't want people to feel that they won't be heard or their questions won't be answered. We will follow up with you to give you to ensure your questions are answered.

Back to the budgets. Can you explain a bit more about the support categories? What will the support categories look like in the new way of planning, particularly in terms of the flexible budget and the stated support?

SPEAKER:

There will be 16 categories, I won't run through them because I will forget a couple. There will be a very flexible amount of core supports, same as there are now. There will be many more things in there. The participant will be able to use that flexible funding for things like in-home community supports, maybe in-home living supports, more things will be bundled up into that flexible category.

One of the things were really keen to work with people on is how do we map across and explain in an old framework plan that used to be here and now is going to be here in a new framework plan, that is something we are really keen to consult on.

Then there will be a list of types of supports that have to be stated in the plan. When we see stated, we mean that funding against the particular category of

support can only be used for that. That is similar to what happens in the old framework plan now but the NDIS plan rules will be setting out how they are to be stated. There will be some where there is no choice, they will always be stated. The consultation the Department of Health is running will really lock down and whether something is flexible or whether it can only be used for one thing.

There are other ways that delegate can make a comment on the plan. To make sure that, for example, in a big flexible bucket of money, there is a particular allowance for a particular thing, or it might be that you have to use a particular provider for a type of support. So, there is still a way to make a comment in the same way we do now but the big difference is that stated supports rather than the delegate making a decision about flexible and stated, as they do now, that is going to be super clear and transparent and fair because that will be set out in the NDIS Rules.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Clair and thank you everyone online for your patience. I can see in the chat, and I understand there is some frustration about us asking you to put your questions in the chat, I appreciate that. If you would like, and if you're open to it, we are happy to follow up with you in person to discuss more, to take your questions from you directly.

Our next steps will be to do that, but also, to look at what questions have come in through the chat, to cobble and pull together responses for you. We will also develop a meeting summary from today, so that you can share information through your network. It is really important to get as much information out there as we can. The information that is accurate and that busts myths.

Thank you everyone for coming together today. Clair, thank you very much for sharing your intricate knowledge with us online.

SPEAKER:

Huge thank you, everyone. I think we recognise we can spend a whole day on this and it won't be the last time we talk to you. Just want to make sure that everyone gets the same information at the same time. We'll come back with questions on notice and follow up with things we did not get to in the chat.

I really want to thank you for joining this morning. They were great questions and we will keep answering the ones we didn't get to. Thank you for your time, it was really lovely to see you all.

SPEAKER:

Thank you everyone.

From: [s47f - personal priv](#) [Brooke](#)
To: [Verlin, Aaron](#)
Cc: [s47f - personal](#) [Abbey](#)
Subject: SNA Briefing transcript
Date: Friday, 6 March 2026 12:03:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[Transcript - SNA and ICAN briefing - 2026-03-05.docx](#)
Importance: High

Hi AV

Attached is the transcript from yesterday's briefing. I've reviewed and can see where the misunderstanding is. In the Q&A (see below and pg 10 – **highlighted yellow** in the attached):

Q: Can a participant or will a participant be able to view their draft report before it is finalised? Just to check back that the information is accurate and correct. Just another one, people have different communications needs - would it be possible for a participant to do an assessment in writing, for example?

A: Thank you, Susan. I will take the writing in first and the answer to that is no. The reason for that is because it is a semistructured conversation, it sounds like jargon but I am going to say a person-centred conversation. It doesn't allow the assessor to follow up and ask questions about particular things. So not in writing, but there are options to do it over the phone or in video call or in Teams or in person. Lots of different ways.

However, earlier in the presentation we specifically call out that can be conducted in a variety of settings tailored to the participant's needs (see below and also pg.4 **highlighted blue** in the attached)

"So the I-CAN tool can be used either online or in person. The disability supports for older adults program has a range of ways, it can also be done over the phone. It is not dependent upon a particular setting or way of completing it. So a really important part of using it is that the results are the same, whether or not you are face-to-face or on a video call, or over the phone. So that was really important. It is a semistructured interview that is tailored to the particular needs of the participant. That might include their particular disability, or cultural needs"

We've also committed to providing a summary and answering questions that we didn't get to at the time.

Hope that helps. Let me know if you need anything else.

B

Brooke [s47f - personal privacy](#)
 Divisional Support Officer to Clair Wheeler
 A/General Manager
 Co-design and Engagement

National Disability Insurance Agency

M: s47F - personal privacy

E brooke. s47F - personal privacy [@ndis.gov.au](mailto:brooke.s47F-personal.privacy@ndis.gov.au)



The NDIA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.





SNA and ICAN briefing (AUSNAA1703A - Remote Captioning)
05 Mar 2026 11:00 AM

Ai-Media Transcript -SNA_AND_ICAN_BRIEFING (English)
MAR_05_2026

NDIA — SNA and I-CAN briefing

SPEAKER:

It is wonderful to see so many people online this morning. George is just coming in. Good morning everyone. It is beautiful to see you all. Please don't be shy, put your cameras on if you feel comfortable to do so. This is a really exciting opportunity for all co-design working groups to come together.

It is probably one of the few times we have done it, so this is very good and it is wonderful to see you all today. We will be talking about the participant pathway, just very briefly. Thank you for coming together, I just want to give a quick acknowledgement to Country. My name is Susan more, you have not met you already I am branch manager of Co- design. I am based on Ngunnawal Country, that is Canberra. I have been given permission by the local Ngunnawal Elders, to present the Acknowledgement of Country in Language. (Speaks in Language) this is Ngunnawal Country, today we are all meeting on Ngunnawal Country, or I am coming to you from Ngunnawal Country. We acknowledge and pay respects to our Elders, past and present. Welcome everyone, special welcome to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people on the line, and allies.

Please do share where you are beaming in from this morning, in the chat.

A little bit of housekeeping before we go on. We will bring up a side of housekeeping. Let us commit to having a safe and inclusive meeting, a safe and inclusive environment where we can all talk and share our ideas. Where we will have the opportunity to raise questions. I want to note that some of the content may evoke personal or emotional responses. If you need to pull out, or pause, please feel free to do so.

Please also note that NDIA has a TELUS Health service that is available to all working group members. So if you need to connect with them, reach out, let us know, we are very happy to help you connect with that.

As I started out saying, we will hear about the participant pathway and a little bit about the assessment process. We will hear from Clair Wheeler, the acting general manager, very shortly, and after the presentation we will have some time for question and answer. We will have to stop at 11:55 AM on the dot. We have to do get to another meeting and we apologise for that. When we get to the Q&A time, I will direct you to the Q&A function in the Teams chat. At the top, if you are on a desktop computer, at the top revenue can see a Q&A icon. Please use that if you can.

If you can't, and it is too hard, you can still post questions in the chat. We will do our best to get all of the questions, but I thank you, if you have given your

questions in advance. We will start with questions you have given us in advance, and then we will move to other questions that come in off the floor.

So let me introduce, she needs no introduction, Clair Wheeler, the acting general manager for co-design and engagement division. Over to you.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Susan, Clair speaking. Lovely to be with you this morning, I joining from Country in Geelong.

We are going to run through the new participant pathway, that sets the scene for the Support Needs Assessment meeting, and some more detail about how the agency is working with the University of Melbourne and the Centre for the Disability Studies to incorporate the I-CAN tool into our Support Needs Assessment.

We will pick up questions but we get into the pack.

You will know that in the middle of this year we plan to start delivering a new way of planning, you may have heard that called New Framework Planning, that is what the NDIS Eight calls it. We will start to use a Support Needs Assessment as a way to identify people's disability Support Needs Assessment and develop their necessary budget in the plan. It is responding to the recommendation in the NDIS Review to provide a much fairer, much more consistent way of planning, and to remove the confrontational and stressful conversations in developing a line by line plan, which of course is what we do now.

I will give you an overview about four different stages of that new way of planning. There is four different steps that the participant will go through. The first is to prepare for their first Support Needs Assessment. The second is the support needs assessment itself, the third is getting the plan and understanding the reasonable and necessary budget, and talking through some of the other settings in the plan. And then they fourth stages using the plan. The plan will be set out a little differently, funding will be more flexible than it is at the moment.

I will go back to the first step. I really do want to call out our participant experience co-design working group, who have really informed, and given us great feed back, and helped us to shape the experience I will talk through. Lots of work, many hours of discussion, and collaboration, so thanks to all of you who are on the call.

What we know is that participants want to speak with someone who can really help them prepare for their Support Needs Assessment. They want a range of different resources and tools to help them prepare, and to understand what they need to do, and when. So in this first stage participants can expect to find out what is changing. How it will impact them, why it is happening, when it is going to happen, and what they need to do.

There is a range of ways that people will be able to get that information. There will be staff who can talk people through, some people might prefer to get that information from the website as well. So lots of different ways that people can get the right information, and there will be webpages, and intentionally tools and resources that people can use as well.

Second stage, the Support Needs Assessment meeting. Again, once you have booked your support needs assessment, and the right information, and you really understand what is happening, the support needs assessment is a really person-centred and strengths-based conversation to understand people's particular disability-related support needs. It is a semistructured conversation which means there is no set questions or answers. But the tool we are going to use, the I-CAN tool, will guide the discussion and help the assessor to understand the participant's daily needs. We will make sure that is a really comprehensive conversation. There will be a couple of other elements to the meeting, and I will talk about this in much more detail in the following slides, because that is really most of the information that we will give you this morning.

There will be a discussion about the participant's particular living situation, and daily life. And then for some people, there will be some more targeted assessments supports that might be more complex. Things like high cost assistive technology, or disability-related health supports.

At the end of that assessment the participant will get a record. There is a Support Needs Assessment report. That report is used to help build the participant's reasonable and necessary budget. Then there is a conversation with the person, the delegate, who makes the decision to approve the plan. This is the third stage in our process, so getting the plan. It will have told us they want to talk to the person who approves that plan. So there is a conversation to run through the reasonable and necessary budget is. What the different categories, we will call them support information, and groupings. And it is really what we would call categories in your plan today.

Said the planner, the delegate, will be able to work through with the participant what funding is in each funding of the plan. And also talk to people about things like how long the plan is going to be. Funding periods. And pick up any particular risks or issues to talk through with the participant. They will also talk to them about plan management types as well.

Then the fourth stage is using the flexible plan. There will continue to be a plan implementation meeting. And the person who is going to help the participant to implement the plan will really talk through things like the participant's goals, what they want to achieve from the funding, and help meet the things in their daily life that we have picked up in the Support Needs Assessment. So exactly as we do now. An implementation conversation. The thing to say is that there will be more support to help people implement a much more flexible plan, because it will be... In the same way it is now. There is flexible funding. And it is really important to make sure that the things the participant buys are on the list of approved NDIS supports.

So, more support to help set up, and the first time that the participant uses the plan.

I will get into more detail about the Support Needs Assessment. I think they're going back to slide four. Thank you.

We have talked a little bit about Support Needs Assessments response to the recommendation in the NDIS Review. The principal is really about being much

fairer and creating equity, and much more consistency and what people can expect in their NDIS budget. And then we will just move to the next slide, where we talk about what the support needs assessment tool is.

The tool forms the core of the Support Needs Assessment meeting. It is not the only bit. But it is the core that is really going to guide the Support Needs Assessment. And the agency has bought a license to use the I-CAN tool from the Centre for Disability Studies, that is part of the University of Sydney. The tool has been in use for quite a number of years out in the world. It looks at 12 domains or areas of a person's life, including complex needs. And it is validated and appropriate for all disability types. It is really important to say it is not validated for children who are aged under 16. So this first round of Support Needs Assessment's for the middle of 2026 and beyond, one not involve children. Really important to say that right at the start.

What we're doing is working with the University of Melbourne and the Centre for Disabilities Studies to customise the tool and implemented specifically for the NDIS. It is really important, before we move on, to be clear about what that tool is not. It is not an algorithm. It does not use any pre-coded logic or program to predetermine or preload outcomes of the Support Needs Assessment. And it does not replace human judgement with any automated decisions or determinations. So the port needs assessor gets guided through by the tool, but absolutely, the Support Needs Assessment is the person recording the conversation.

The procurement of that tool, and we worked last year through a Commonwealth procurement, really important to say that as part of an approach to market. And there are some research projects, and some work, that we will do with the University of Melbourne and the Centre for Disability Studies, to tailor that tool to meet the unique needs of the NDIS. It is a five-year contract, and that is really because it will take us around five years to transition all participants from the plans they are on now, to a New Framework Plan that is developed using a Support Needs Assessment. It will be a very gradual and deliberate assessment. We are certainly not starting by including every single person who is coming up for a plan review in the middle of this year.

We will start very small and then learn and grow over the next four to five years.

So the I-CAN tool is the basis of the Support Needs Assessment. It is made up of firstly the needs assessment conversation, which is guided by the I-CAN tool. It is also based on an environmental and circumstances questionnaire, that is called the PEC tool. And then there might be some additional assessments, if the person has got particularly complex support needs. As I said earlier some examples of that might be (unknown term) health supports.

The I-CAN tool will be used by a trained and accredited assessor. They will conduct the conversation in a strengths-based way, it is a really important point I might pick up a little later. It is a different way of considering what someone's support needs are. And we are really working through that at the moment in some of the testing and the participant consultation that we are doing.

So the I-CAN tool can be used either online or in person. The disability supports for older adults program has a range of ways, it can also be done over the phone.

It is not dependent upon a particular setting or way of completing it. So a really important part of using it is that the results are the same, whether or not you are face-to-face or on a video call, or over the phone. So that was really important.

It is a semistructured interview that is tailored to the particular needs of the participant. That might include their particular disability, or cultural needs. And the participant's goals will help the assessor to run through the I-CAN. So really being able to capture what the person can do using strength-based language. At the same time, the assessor will look at what support the person needs. But also, the level of support and the frequency of support that that person might need.

Next one.

There are 12 domains in the Support Needs Assessment conversation. I will read through them, they are on the slide. They are mobility, domestic life, self-care, community, social and civic life; communication, learning and applying knowledge, general tasks, and demands, lifelong learning, interpersonal interactions and relationships. Behaviours of concern, mental and emotional health, and physical health.

So they are based on the International classification of functioning disability and health and the behaviours of concern, mental and emotional health, and physical health domains have been added in developing the I-CAN to ensure the full range of support needs are captured.

Will move to the next one.

The domains in the I-CAN, the assessor will look at the frequency and the intensity of supports. That really helps to build a complete picture of the participant's needs and strengths. Each subdomain, there are some points underneath all of those 12 categories to talk through, and the assessor will use information from that conversation to understand if there is a support need. But also to score the support need, using a zero to five point scale. So in the intensity consideration, the assessor would think about whether the area is not relevant at all. The person might be independent and they don't need any support.

They might have what we would call managed independence in the tool, that means their needs are managed through using aids or equipment independently. Minor intensity is about whether the person needs some brief or minor support from another person. Moderate support needs, and intensity, are where someone might need a series of prompts or instructions, it might be reassurance or emotional support. All more regular supervision.

Can I get you all to please go on mute, because we are getting background noise. Thank you very much.

There is also an extensive need for support. That is really is someone would need support for the majority or for the entire task. Or of it is completed wholly for that person.

And then pervasive, which is technical language which the I-CAN tool uses, it is not plain English. The person needs direct support from two or more people.

Then the assessable think about frequency. So the conversation is going to be about the person's daily life, to really build the. So the frequency would be whether someone never needs that intensity of support. Occasionally, that might be less than once a week. Weekly, so one to six times per week. Daily, more frequently, which is four or more times per day. Or continuously, and that is where someone would need consistent support throughout the entire day.

So you can see the picture is starting to build of what supports the person needs. How much support they need. And then how often they need that support. And it is a really comprehensive conversation, if you imagine, against the 12 domains, and then there are areas underneath each of the 12. So a really person-centred and individualised conversation.

This is an overview of the whole Support Needs Assessment. The I-CAN tool is one part. And if you are reading through the slides you will see that that is highlighted as part A in the slide or in the accessible pack. There are two other areas in the Support Needs Assessment meeting, though. The first one is the personal and environmental circumstances questionnaire. This collect really important background and questions about may be particular safeguarding supports the person might need. It might be about their employment or their Home and Living situation. It might be about their informal supports.

So things that the I-CAN is not going to pick up because it is not directly about disability support needs, but it is about the context that that person lives that life, and who is around them.

And then some participants will need more targeted assessments for specific types of support. And again we might need to request for additional external reports and assessments, in the same way we do now. For example for a complex home modification, we need someone who is suitably qualified to recommend a technical home modification to someone's home or the premises. So some of those will continue.

A bit more about the PEC - that is something you might recognise already. We do already use an environmental and circumstances questionnaire in current plans. It is being redesigned a bit for New Framework Planning. And some of our co-design groups have really helped us to work through that. Our safeguarding co-design group have been really, really important in steering and guiding us on how we should approach some of those safeguarding and risk conversation.

It integrates into the Support Needs Assessment alongside the I-CAN. So it is a conversation-based assessment meeting, which the assessor will lead. They will really draw out the right answers to the particular questions and use that to build a whole of person assessment report. What we don't want to happen is the assessor to read out a list of I-CAN questions and then read out a list of environmental and circumstances questions. It is a free-flowing conversation, and the way we will train the assessors is to make sure they draw out the right information at each stage.

The questionnaire is going to be suited to a range of participant groups, that includes First Nations participants, and culturally and linguistically diverse participants.

Designing the Support Needs Assessment, and really helping to build the experience in line with what participants and our co-design working groups have told us that they want and need. Back in October of last year the agency established what we call the Design Harp, and it is working with participants directly to test and refine everything around the new way of planning. That includes Support Needs Assessment products, processes for three of the stages I talked about before.

So preparing someone for their Support Needs Assessment, the meeting itself, and then the resources that sit around the outside of that. And that might be a work book that helps you to capture your thoughts and think about the things that you particularly want to talk to the assessor about, and also things on our website, letters that we will send to people to help them understand what is coming, and when.

So the Design Hub working with people. We started working with a group of frontline staff who started to test the really early thinking and the participants experience, and early prototypes are things like letters, guidance, scripts, for the assessor to use. We have some great feedback from that. Really positive reactions to having a strengths-based conversation, and also to having a much more in-depth and person-centred conversation. We have got really good feedback about things that maybe were not quite so clear in the letters, or things that the assessor could have explained more clearly.

We talked to people about whether the conversation was too struck, or not structured enough. How they felt blowed, whether it was too long, too short, and we have really improved and evolved our design and processes and results. So we are going back around for another round of Design Hub testing that has just started in February. This is where we test the second version of things, and we are really lucky now that we have the first round of credited assessors to use the I-CAN tool, they are people who will actually be Support Needs Assessment as in the new workforce. So we are being able to bring actual assessors, who are going through the training and learning how to use the tool, and the environmental circumstances questionnaire, and how to write the reports. Bringing them together with participants, and running what we call simulated support needs assessments.

So really positive, and it is really exciting to be kicking that off in much more detail.

I might pause there. That is a lot of information. I am really conscious that I have talk through a lot of things. So I want to make sure we allow enough time to go through some questions and pick up a little more of the detail. Or if you want me to go back over anything that I have missed.

Susan, I think I will hand over to you to take us through the questions, if that is OK.

SPEAKER:

100%. Thank you so much Clare for the presentation. I have been following the chat and some of the questions and answers in the Q&A icon. I can see that for some people the information there was something that you already knew. That is

OK. This is an opportunity, I guess, for us all to confirm our understanding, consolidate.

In our group, we have all got different levels of understanding. So Clare, thank you so much for setting that out for us again. And I want to just note to everyone online, this is not the one and only opportunity to get these kinds of information. There are a series of public webinars that we are running online. We are starting up reform town hall meetings, and all of you online will be invited to those. The first one commences shortly, on 17 March.

Information is available on these via NDIS Engage. If you want more information please ask. In the Q&A, thank you if you send us your questions earlier. We will start with questions sent in an advanced and then we will move to questions on chat. We may not get to them all. But we can follow up with you on specific questions.

Mindful of time. Clare, can you give us some examples of the questions that may be asked in the core assessment? That is in the I-CAN assessment. In particular around community, social and civic life domains.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Susan. Clare speaking. As I said earlier, because the Support Needs Assessment and the I-CAN is what we call a semistructured conversation, it is not a list of set questions that every single person answers. What the assessor does is tailor the conversation, and they have a real-life discussion with each participant, based on what they know about them. They will have a look at the person's record before they come into the meeting.

One of the really important things that is being worked through at the moment in the public consultation, about the NDIS rules, is what information the assessor will get access to, and will look at. So once that has landed, we can give you the specifics of that. But the principle that we have worked with, and that we have co-designed with our working group is that the assessor will go into that conversation having prepared, and having done some background reading, and having a look at that participant's life, disability, and circumstances.

So they will tailor the conversation. So there are no set questions. It may be that two participants with different needs, different disability types, and different lives will be asked different things. But they will all be asked about the 12 domains, the assessor might repeat back to someone that, "I don't think this domain is going to be relevant you, do you agree?" And in some cases the domain conversation will be longer. And for some it will be shorter.

It is more open questions and more a free-flowing conversation, which allows it to be person centred and individualise. It is very different to a functional assessment, which some people are used to. So that is one of our challenges, and one of the things we really want to work with participants to understand. How do we give you confidence going into the Support Needs Assessment? What it will be like. How can we help you prepare and think about the things that you want to make sure you talk to the assessor about. So that is the things we are testing in the Design Hub.

The assessor might ask tell me about your day... To me how you communicate. Me about what support you might need in a particular area. So we are working through with our participant Design Hub, think about how we can help people prepare for that, because it is not standard questions for everyone.

SPEAKER:

Thank you, I really similar question, this time with the personal and environmental circumstances questionnaire, or what we shorten to the PECQ. Can you give us some examples of the questions that will come up in the PECQ, and if I can add to that as well, is there any scoring in the PECQ? For example we saw in the presentation there was a scoring framework for the I-CAN, or the core tool. So can you give us a bit on that as well.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Susan, Clare speaking. So the PECQ is not scored. It is not a frequency, there is no one to five scale. But there are some questions that the assessor will ask about, for example, if we are thinking about employment and employment is one of the things that gets picked up in that questionnaire, how many hours per week do you work? For example.

There might be some different options, which is that they don't work at all, they work more than 30 hours... It is really trying to build a picture. And again, it is not set questions the person will read out word for word. There are different areas that the questionnaire will pick up. It is collecting information that the I-CAN does not necessarily pick up, that we need to understand.

It might be things we need to understand for plan management discussions, for example. It might be about picking up participant risk, or particular safeguards. Again, I say hours safeguarding co-design working group have really helped to design the approach to the questionnaire.

SPEAKER:

Thank you. Thank you very much. We will move on to questions about the core assessment tool, or what we refer to as the I-CAN tool, which we, the agency, have cured the license for from the University of Melbourne.

So the core tool, or I-CAN all, can you tell us a bit more about how the tool has been, or will be validated? Validated for cultural safety. Also, validated I suppose, validated for complex needs. And for fluctuating needs. Just as a bit of context, there is some discussion in the chat, some concern that some disability cohorts, especially autistic, sensory, rare diseases as well, these may not be picked up sufficiently by I-CAN. So tell us about the validation.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Susan, Clare speaking. The important point is the I-CAN tool is an external tool that has been validated over many years by the Centre for Disability Studies and the sector. There has been an awful lot of work that has gone into it before the agency has bought a license for it. It is being used for First Nations people, and for people with a range of complexities.

We have arranged with the supplier that we will tailor the tool for the specific needs of the NDIS. One of the really important things is making sure that we meet the commitments we make in the scheme to working in a culturally safe

way with First Nations participants. And working with lots of different cohorts, and involving participants and how we design and roll things out in the scheme.

So we will work with the sector and the Centre For Disability Studies to get feedback, and we will get feedback from people using it. People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background, and there absolutely are opportunities to continuously improve and tailor it over time. I'm trying to think of a good example, it might be a basic one. But maybe we will identify that we need to ask an additional question, or maybe there is a particular domain that when we look at how it is being tailored for a reasonable and necessary, and against the things that come up in planning, that we need to change.

It really allows us to get a good understanding of quality, to assure the experience and to make sure we talk to everyone after their support needs assessment to understand what the experience was. It is a really important part of designing and delivering new framework planning, is to look at what we thought would happen, is it happening, and other things that we didn't expect. We will make sure we have things in place to respond where there are unintended outcomes for things that we really want to look at in more detail.

The base of the tool, I really want to assure people that the people who are in that first group of people to move across in the middle of this year will absolutely get a tool that works. We are not saying we don't think it is any good, it is validated, we have tested that when we procured the license and entered into the contracts. The work that we will do over the next five years is really about tailoring and really continuously improving, which is the approach we take to lots of things in the NDIS.

SPEAKER:

Thank you very much, for explaining in detail, and feeling for you on the spot doing a great job. Everyone online doing a great job as well. We will keep going with the questions. If you are able to put your questions into the chat, please do so. It will just make my job a bit easier so I can group questions together, so we can get through the questions a bit quicker.

Clair, back to you. Grouping a few questions here, again, around the assessment process. There are concerns that through an assessment process, a participant might not do their best on the day. Questions here are how can we really trust what an assessor will take away from the meeting and report about me, and score me? Can a participant or will a participant be able to view their draft report before it is finalised? Just to check back that the information is accurate and correct. Just another one, people have different communications needs - would it be possible for a participant to do an assessment in writing, for example?

Thank you, Susan. I will take the writing in first and the answer to that is no. The reason for that is because it is a semistructured conversation, it sounds like jargon but I am going to say a person-centred conversation. It doesn't allow the assessor to follow up and ask questions about particular things. So not in writing, but there are options to do it over the phone or in video call or in Teams or in person. Lots of different ways.

I have completely forgotten part one and part two, can you ask me again? I'm terrible at multipart questions.

SPEAKER:

I'm trying to be efficient. It is really around whether a participant will be able to view their their draft report before it is finalised. Just to make sure it is accurate.

SPEAKER:

Perfect. There are two areas where we will check with the participant. The first is that the assessor will check as they go, and at the meeting they will have a little playback and repeat back to the person the things that they have talked about to make sure that they have understood things correctly. Then, the participant will see a copy of the assessment report before they get their plan. I know lots of people have talked to us about this. What the delegate will do when they approved the plan is to take the assessment report and use that to develop the plan. The participant experience working group and many other participants have talked to us about how important it is for the participant to see that report before it goes to the delegate to develop the plan.

The participant will get a copy of the assessment report, and the purpose of that so that they can correct any errors. Again, one of the really important rules that is out for consultation at the moment is when the delegate, the person who approves the plan, when they need to order a new assessment, replacement assessment, because either the participant has concerns of the delegate has concerns or it hasn't met the quality standards - that is all going to be set out in the NDIS rules. Certainly participants can tell us if they don't think the report is correct. The delegate will also check it as well to make sure it meets particular standards and at that point, it is used to develop a reasonable and necessary budget. So there are some reasonable and necessary checkpoints.

SPEAKER:

Thank you. We are getting to time. We have three minutes left and I will ask you that last question. Then I will come back in and close. I don't want people to feel that they won't be heard or their questions won't be answered. We will follow up with you to give you to ensure your questions are answered.

Back to the budgets. Can you explain a bit more about the support categories? What will the support categories look like in the new way of planning, particularly in terms of the flexible budget and the stated support?

SPEAKER:

There will be 16 categories, I won't run through them because I will forget a couple. There will be a very flexible amount of core supports, same as there are now. There will be many more things in there. The participant will be able to use that flexible funding for things like in-home community supports, maybe in-home living supports, more things will be bundled up into that flexible category.

One of the things were really keen to work with people on is how do we map across and explain in an old framework plan that used to be here and now is going to be here in a new framework plan, that is something we are really keen to consult on.

Then there will be a list of types of supports that have to be stated in the plan. When we see stated, we mean that funding against the particular category of

support can only be used for that. That is similar to what happens in the old framework plan now but the NDIS plan rules will be setting out how they are to be stated. There will be some where there is no choice, they will always be stated. The consultation the Department of Health is running will really lock down and whether something is flexible or whether it can only be used for one thing.

There are other ways that delegate can make a comment on the plan. To make sure that, for example, in a big flexible bucket of money, there is a particular allowance for a particular thing, or it might be that you have to use a particular provider for a type of support. So, there is still a way to make a comment in the same way we do now but the big difference is that stated supports rather than the delegate making a decision about flexible and stated, as they do now, that is going to be super clear and transparent and fair because that will be set out in the NDIS Rules.

SPEAKER:

Thank you Clair and thank you everyone online for your patience. I can see in the chat, and I understand there is some frustration about us asking you to put your questions in the chat, I appreciate that. If you would like, and if you're open to it, we are happy to follow up with you in person to discuss more, to take your questions from you directly.

Our next steps will be to do that, but also, to look at what questions have come in through the chat, to cobble and pull together responses for you. We will also develop a meeting summary from today, so that you can share information through your network. It is really important to get as much information out there as we can. The information that is accurate and that busts myths.

Thank you everyone for coming together today. Clair, thank you very much for sharing your intricate knowledge with us online.

SPEAKER:

Huge thank you, everyone. I think we recognise we can spend a whole day on this and it won't be the last time we talk to you. Just want to make sure that everyone gets the same information at the same time. We'll come back with questions on notice and follow up with things we did not get to in the chat.

I really want to thank you for joining this morning. They were great questions and we will keep answering the ones we didn't get to. Thank you for your time, it was really lovely to see you all.

SPEAKER:

Thank you everyone.