13 December 2018

The NDIA appreciates the work of the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS, and welcomes evidence based insights and reviews, which ultimately help the NDIA deliver a better service to participants.

The Government will respond formally to the recommendations, noting that work is already underway by the NDIA to improve AT processes.

The NDIS is a world-first, once in a generation reform – the biggest since the introduction of Medicare. The size and scale of the NDIS means that it will not be without challenges and the NDIA is committed to identifying and improving processes as the Scheme continues to roll out across Australia.

The NDIA recognises the transformative power of appropriate AT and has been working to ensure participants have access to individualised AT solutions that enhance their economic and community participation.

The NDIA has identified areas of AT implementation and delivery that require improvement. This aligns with feedback from participants and the sector.

The NDIA takes this feedback seriously, and acknowledges that more needs to be done to improve the timeliness and quality of AT decision making.

A program of work is underway to improve processes for the assessment and delivery of AT.

The NDIA is committed to delivering a better AT experience for participants and providers. The NDIA:

1. Has implemented immediate improvements to the planning process including reducing the need for quotes for all AT, and eliminating the need for quotes for low cost AT;
2. Has established dedicated resources to address outstanding AT plan approvals;
3. Will strengthen its support for timely AT repairs and replacements by including appropriate funding in plans;
4. Will pilot a new process to improve the assessments and timeframes for more complex and non-standard AT. The new pathway design will draw on the experience of specialised assessors who will work with participants and the NDIA during planning; and,
5. Will continue to engage with state and territory AT programs to identify opportunities for delivering improved AT outcomes to participants.

Previously, multiple professional assessments and quotes, as well as internal technical advice were required to implement most AT requests. The NDIA has a series of improvements designed to make the AT process simpler, easier and quicker. These improvements are outlined below.

Number	Category	Improvements	When
1	Low cost, low risk AT <$1,500	1. AT is approved in plans based on reasonable and necessary planning decisions. No further assessment, quotes or approval required.	Implemented May 2018
2	Reducing the need for quotes for AT items >$1,500	1. No more than two quotes required for AT items.	Effective now, guidance to planners to be updated December 2018
3	Standard AT items	1. A new tool for planners to provide notional AT budgets for standard AT items. In most cases only one quote will be required, and for some items a quote will not be required by the NDIA.	New Tool and process in place February 2019 (progressive expansion)
4	AT Replacements	1. Replacement items (particularly like-for-like) are approved without needing re-assessment and will only require one quote	February 2019

Number	Category	Improvements	When
5	AT Repairs	1. Appropriate funding for repairs and maintenance in plans reducing the need for plan reviews when AT fails. 2. New process to enable better access to refurbishment and re-use of AT with priority for children.	June 2019
6	Complex and non-standard AT	1. Specialised Professional Panel engaged to conduct consistent and timely AT assessments.	Pilot Panel in place: April 2019

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