28 February 2019

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants will find it easier to replace their Assistive Technology (AT) to enable them to continue to pursue their goals following the introduction of simpler processes.

Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher said replacement for standard AT items will be quickly assessed by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) without needing a full re-assessment, and will only require one quote for items valued between $1,500 and $15,000.

“We recognise the importance of Assistive Technology to NDIS participants. AT enables people with a disability to live a better, more independent and inclusive life,” Mr Fletcher said.

“By improving and streamlining the process for approvals, we are cutting back on the red tape to replace items, while also reducing the delays in the assessment process and delivery of AT.

Assistant Minister for Social Services, Housing and Disability Services, Sarah Henderson said that feedback from participants and stakeholders has guided these changes.

“By refining the AT process, and simplifying the AT replacement process, NDIS participants are better supported to maximise use of their funding and focus on their goals,” Ms Henderson said.

David Sinclair, Executive Officer of the AT industry body Assistive Technology Suppliers Australia (ATSA) agreed saying, “ATSA welcomes this announcement and looks forward to the improvement it will make to NDIS participants.”

From April 2019, the NDIA will commence the pilot of a new approach to improve the quality and timeliness of assessment for participants requiring complex and non-standard AT.

In June 2019, the NDIA will introduce changes making it easier for participants to access refurbished or pre-used AT.

These changes build on earlier improvements to AT processes. Since May 2018, low cost, low risk AT under $1,500 could be purchased without further assessment, quotes or approvals once approved as reasonable and necessary in a participant’s plan. This benefited an estimated 45 per cent of participants requiring AT.

Since December 2018, no more than two quotes have been required for AT costing greater than $1,500.

When the NDIS is fully rolled out, it is estimated that approximately $1 billion per annum will be spent on AT.

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