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In 2015, the NDIA released the NDIS Assistive Technology Strategy (Strategy) after consultation with people with disability and the sector.

The Strategy sets out our vision to build an empowering, sustainable and consistent approach to ensuring participants have choice in, and access to, individualised assistive technology solutions that enable and enhance their economic and community participation.

- Assistive Technology Strategy (PDF 2.4MB)
- Assistive Technology Strategy (DOCX 850KB)

In the Strategy we identified 3 priorities that will help us achieve this vision:

1. Support and stimulate a vibrant and innovative supply-side market.
2. Support and stimulate active, informed participant-led demand.
3. Deliver a financially robust, sustainable Scheme that generates economic and social value.

In 2020, we reviewed the Strategy and in consultation with participant focus groups, the Participant Reference Group and the Industry Reference Group, we further developed:

- our vision for improved assistive technology provision
- an action plan for 2021-23
- alignment with the NDIA's Corporate Plan and the principles of the Participant Service Charter.

Our vision for improved assistive technology (AT) provision

Increased participant satisfaction through:

- informed participants optimising their use of AT to pursue home and living goals
- improved processes that reduce planning delays and reviews.

Improved Scheme sustainability through:

- effective, consistent supply and pricing
- reduced recurring costs
- ensuring the AT provided is working as it should and delivering good outcomes.

A dynamic and innovative market that delivers:

- customer focused AT information and services
- increased collaboration between AT innovators, providers and people with disability
- more actionable data insights.

AT action plan 2021-23

The AT action plan sets out the 6 key areas we will focus on to achieve our vision.

Our action plan will be updated over the course of the year.

Participant AT sourcing groups

It can be difficult for participants to find the right value for money supports. We want to connect groups of participants with similar AT supports in their plans, to help improve AT outcomes.

The groups will:

- identify the AT they need
- tell us what improvements can be made to how they receive or purchase the support.

Together with participants we will work with providers to negotiate prices and better outcomes for participants.

Participant AT capability

Many participants want to build their skills in selecting and using their AT.

We will help participants to strengthen their AT capability.

We will streamline approvals and plans where a participant has demonstrated strong AT capability.

Participant-focused AT information services

All people with disability need reliable AT information (including on costs and likely benefits) to make good and timely AT decisions.

We will work with the sector to strengthen and coordinate existing and emerging AT information services.

We will also share information about how participants are using AT and the outcomes they achieve, to help others plan their AT.

AT innovation and product stewardship

The majority of AT is imported to Australia, making it difficult for participants to influence product features or services that meet their needs.

To improve AT access for all Australians with disability, we will:

- collaborate with participants and the market to influence AT innovation
- encourage emerging opportunities within the design and manufacturing sector.

We will also work with stakeholders to promote quality adaptable products and improve the utilisation of AT products for their full service life.

Refurbishment, reuse and recycling components can save money and resources. We want to ensure participants can get the best use from their investment in AT.

Data and processes

Better collection and use of AT data will:

- help us to identify what is effective and what isn’t
- improve NDIA processes and tasks
- reduce the risk of fraud
- help everyone make more informed AT decisions.

Improve access to AT advice and assessment

Participants sometimes find it hard to find an AT assessor or advisor with the skills to understand their needs and good solutions. It can also be difficult for participants, families and their carers to find services that represent value for money.

Many people with disabilities have significant experience with AT and the interest and capacity to share this in a paid role. Some have become trained as AT peer mentors.

We want to work with stakeholders to support the development of the AT workforce expands to include career pathways for people with disability.

A more diverse, qualified AT workforce will also help participants find a suitable AT provider for their needs.

Our progress

The following projects are currently in progress and we will publish links to outcomes when available:

- Participant AT sourcing groups - improving AT options and supply for young participants and those who rely on continence supports.
- Establishment of Continence provider list.
- Participant capability - supporting participants to build their skills for selecting and using AT.
- Information sessions - improving community access to reliable AT information and support informed decision making.
- Innovation - collaborating with participants and suppliers to promote AT innovation and responsible reuse. In November 2022, we published a Framework to guide the role of Artificial Intelligence enabled AT under the NDIS.
- Data and process - enhancing our AT processes and providing clear information to improve the participant experience.
- AT workforce - working with stakeholders to build the AT workforce including:
    - providing more opportunities for people with disability
    - making it easier for participants to choose the right provider or AT advisor.

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