27 April 2020

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Stuart Robert, today announced further initiatives to support NDIS participants and disability providers during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Australian Government has been encouraged by the positive response to the initiatives in place to support NDIS participants and disability providers during the coronavirus pandemic. We also continue identifying new ways to provide additional support as the situation evolves.

For the next five months, eligible participants will be able to flexibly use existing NDIS plan funding to purchase low-cost Assistive Technology, including smart devices, to enable continued access to disability supports through telehealth and telepractice while physical distancing regulations are in place for coronavirus pandemic. This new development is important for ensuring NDIS participants remain connected to their services and disability supports.

Also, new support items for Supported Independent Living (SIL) providers are now available where a participant has been diagnosed with the coronavirus, including higher intensity support and professional cleaning services. This is to ensure minimum service disruption and the continued delivery of services.

Lastly, to ensure all eligible Australians continue to be able to apply for access to the NDIS, downloadable Access Request and Supporting Evidence Forms are now available on the NDIS website.

These initiatives build on previous coronavirus-specific supports announced for NDIS participants and providers, including outbound calls to high-risk participants, special teams of planners to assist participants, flexible use of funding to access disability supports and for providers, cash flow assistance and a 10 per cent COVID-19 loading on some services.

Since the announcement of these initiatives on 21 March, almost $600 million has been paid in one-month advance payments to almost 5,000 providers to offer immediate cash flow relief and ensure services could continue. Whilst, as of last week, more than $300 million in weekly provider payments were processed, indicating the majority of services are continuing and participants are still accessing the disability supports they need.

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