26 February 2021

The NDIA has today announced the successful organisations that will make up the Independent Assessment Panel, to deliver free assessments for NDIS applicants and participants.

The panel of eight experienced organisations has Australia-wide coverage to ensure that new and existing participants, irrespective of their circumstances or where they live, will have access to the free assessments to receive supports through the NDIS.

The Agency has completed a formal and thorough open tender process to find the right organisations to deliver independent assessments, selected for their capability, experience and expertise.

Independent assessments will allow people with disability to test their eligibility for the Scheme, and participants to receive more flexible NDIS plan budgets to help increase their independence.

The roll out of Independent assessments was announced in August 2020, along with a number of improvements to the NDIS access and planning experience.

Independent assessments will provide new and existing participants with free, quick access to internationally recognised tools and qualified health professionals, removing the need for them to organise an assessment or collect evidence to show the impact of their disability, saving time and money.

In most cases, new and existing participants will be able to choose between two or more Independent Assessment organisations, with a range of health professionals employed by each to conduct assessments for NDIS applicants and participants.

Employed assessors will:

- Be an allied health professional in one of the assessor categories
- Have a minimum of 12 months full time clinical experience (post General Registration) working within their respective field and appropriate level of clinical supervision
- Have direct face-to-face experience working with a variety of clients, covering a wide range of disabilities, support needs, skills and backgrounds
- Use standardised assessment tools, that they are qualified to use, to gather information.

Before independent assessments will be introduced for new participants in mid-2021 and for existing participants from late 2021, tailored training will be provided to the panel organisations to deliver the assessments.

Independent assessments were first announced by the Government in August 2020, along with a number of reforms to improve the NDIS experience. They were first recommended by the

Productivity Commission at the Scheme's inception, and more recently by the NDIS Act (Tune) Review.

The feedback we get from the independent assessment pilot and submissions to consultation paper, will help shape how these vital assessments will be implemented.

The NDIA will continue to be accountable for decisions relating to access and plan budget.

The successful organisations who will be delivering independent assessments to existing participants, as well as people applying to access the NDIS are:

- Outlook Matters Psychology, Innovative Rehab, Pain NT
- Konekt
- Rehab Management (Aust) Pty Ltd
- Access Care Network Australia
- IPAR Rehabilitation
- Advanced Personnel Management (APM)
- HealthStrong
- Allied Care Group

The panel will be in place for three years, with the option for the NDIA to extend it for two more years.

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