26 March 2021

We have released post-consultation reports. These give an overview of the feedback on three consultation papers:

- Access and eligibility policy with independent assessments
- Planning policy for personalised budgets and plan flexibility
- Supporting young children and their families early, to reach their full potential.

We have reviewed and analysed all submissions and included key themes, sentiment and quotes in these reports.

We thank everyone who took the time to provide us with feedback on the proposed changes to the NDIS. You are helping us deliver a better and fairer experience for all people seeking to access the NDIS and participants already in the Scheme.

You can read the reports on the We listened page. Easy Read versions of the reports will be available shortly. A summary is also available below.
We heard from many of you

What you said was heard by us in a variety of ways, through:

- Consultation events across Australia, with over 50 public events held online, in person and via other channels, and more than 1,000 guests attending.
- Direct submissions, including audio and video files. We received more than 760 submissions via these channels.
- More than 150 conversations with sector representatives and peak bodies.

What you told us

The feedback we received has represented a range of views.

While many people recognise and support the need for a more equitable approach in determining access and eligibility to the NDIS, we also heard concerns regarding the uncertainty that these changes may create for some.

Why the NDIS needs to change

The changes we want to make will mean the NDIS will more closely resemble the model originally recommended by the Productivity Commission.

It has been a remarkable transformation in a few short years but we need to ensure access and planning outcomes are more equitable in the future.

It is clear that, for many Australians, the NDIS has been life changing, but others have told us it is not as fair, simple and flexible as it could be.

The success of the NDIS relies on the quality of information we receive to make decisions on who is eligible for the NDIS and the amount of funding they receive for supports.

Our data shows there are significant differences in average plan budgets depending on where you live, and these experiences can challenge the credibility of the Scheme.

Importantly, the idea of independent assessments is not new. Evidence of a person's functional capacity has always been part of the NDIS and is embedded in the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 as being a key input to decision making.

NDIS participants are the experts in their own lives, so it is our job to make sure participants have the right funding in place. We also need to make sure funding is flexible enough so participants can choose the services they need, within the guidelines of what is covered by the NDIS.

What we will do with this feedback

We will use the feedback collected over the last three months to inform draft changes to legislation, policy, implementation approaches and guidance for participants, staff and partners.

We will also conduct other engagement and consultation activities over the next six months on the improvements we are making to the NDIS. This includes:

- Working with health professionals to understand what evidence of disability should be provided as part of the access request process. This should result in more consistent and timely decisions.
- Publishing findings of the second independent assessment pilot which highlights key themes for improvement and real-life participant experiences.
- Establishing an evaluation framework which aims to regularly review and evaluate the participant experience and overall quality of independent assessments.

For young children and their families/carers, we are working to implement these recommendations over the coming years, starting with:

- Updating our Operational Guidelines (recommendation 3 in the Supporting young children and their families early, to reach their full potential paper) to improve transparency and consistency.
- Publishing updated guidance on Developmental Delay (recommendation 13).

- Publishing a consultation paper on how to better support children on the autism spectrum (recommendation 18).

As with any change, we understand that people will have questions or feel uncertain.

In keeping with the Government's commitment, we will make sure people with disability are at the centre of the NDIS. We will continue to openly communicate and share information in a variety of accessible formats, particularly to provide accurate information.

In our Participant Service Charter, we committed to empowering participants by including people with disability and the community to help us develop and test our processes. And we will continue to demonstrate this commitment.

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