



Australian Government



NDIS Review Town Hall

Darwin 13 March 2024

The Department of Social Services and members from the NDIS Review Panel held a discussion about the NDIS Review in Darwin on 13 March 2024.

The session was held in person at the Darwin Convention Centre and was also livestreamed virtually.

Speakers were NDIS Review Co-chair, Professor Bruce Bonyhady AM and panel member Dougie Herd. Robyne Burrige was MC for the event.

Panel discussion

Any NDIS changes need to be designed with people with disability, their families and with their organisations, to make sure they work for everyone.

A connected system of supports inside and outside the NDIS

The panel spoke about how the NDIS Review heard from over 10,000 people about how to improve the NDIS. The panel discussed their plans for improving the NDIS and the main areas where change is recommended.

The NDIS Review wants to create a more connected system of supports inside and outside the NDIS. They recommend new types of supports called foundational supports:

- General foundational supports that will help people find supports, information and advice.
- Targeted foundational supports that will help people with more personalised services, like home services, support services in the community and supports for children and families.

The NDIS Review has recommended changes in the NDIS planning process to make it less confusing and harmful to people with disability:

- When people with disability access the NDIS, the focus will be on the impact of an individual's disability on their daily life rather than on a diagnosis. A simpler application form is proposed and, if assistance is needed, a navigator will be available to help complete it.
- Once in the NDIS, a fairer method for collecting personal information to set the NDIS budget is proposed. This includes an assessment focused on support needs.
- When people enter the NDIS, they will have more choice about how they spend budgets and will be provided with assistance to develop a budget plan that works for them.

People outside and inside the NDIS will be able to get help from a person called a 'navigator'. Navigators will help people access mainstream services (like hospitals and schools), foundational supports and services funded by the NDIS. There will be different kinds of navigators with special knowledge in areas like housing and psychosocial disability.

The NDIS Review wants to improve supports for different groups of people with disability, including specific supports for children and families, people with psychosocial disability, and people with home and living needs.

The NDIS Review heard from people that NDIS services are not always readily available or accessible. The NDIS Review recommended a new system of registration where all providers will be registered. The new registration process will range from simple and straightforward to more complex registration for services in closed settings.

Questions answered by the panel

People were able to ask questions and give feedback using an online interactive tool. People asked hundreds of questions during the panel discussion. Questions were grouped into themes and the panel was asked the most common questions by MC, Robyne Burridge. Questions focused on:

- Will non-registered providers still be recognised as options for self and claimed-managed participants?
- How will the quality and culturally appropriate services delivery be assessed for people on the NDIS who live remotely?
- Will people on the NDIS be able to access a provider of their choice?
- What will the role of state and territory governments be in improving support for children and families?



Closing remarks by the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, Minister for the NDIS

Minister Bill Shorten was accompanied by NDIA Board Member Dr. Richard Fejo, also known as Uncle Richie, along with NDIS participant and disability advocate Sarah Skopellos, and disability advocate Grant Lindsay. The guest speakers reflected on the panel's discussion, noting that the NDIS has been being life changing for many participants and that having access to services in remote areas with appropriate budgets is important.

Minister Shorten discussed the aim of NDIS reforms and how the Australian Government will work with states and territories to support the delivery of these changes. This includes a five-year transition period, robust design and testing with people with disability and a focus on retaining the features of the NDIS that are working well and replacing those that are not.

As the NDIS was introduced to support people with significant needs, Minister Shorten said that the Australian Government will build support systems outside of the NDIS for people who require assistance but are not on the NDIS.

After the session's close, Minister Shorten and Professor Bruce Bonyhady had the opportunity to engage with the attendees to discuss the event and any questions or concerns they had about the NDIS Review.

