



Australian Government



NDIS Review Town Hall

Sydney 18 December 2023

The Department of Social Services and members from the NDIS Review Panel held a discussion about the NDIS Review in Sydney on 18 December 2023.

The session was held in person at the Rydges Hotel and was also livestreamed virtually.

Speakers included Review Co-chairs, Professor Bruce Bonyhady AM and Lisa Paul AO PSM, and panel members Professor Kirsten Deane OAM, Dr Stephen King and Dougie Herd. Disability rights advocate, Elly Demarchelier, 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, Elly Demarchelier. Questions focused on:

- How will the changes to the registration process improve quality and safety for people with disability?
- How will the Australian Government increase its engagement with particular cohorts, such as First Nations people with disability?
- What is the difference between the proposed assessments and independent assessments?

- How will the housing and living supports, being based on an average shared support ratio of one support worker to three participants, apply to participants who aren't sharing a home?

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

Minister Bill Shorten was joined by two people with disability, Aaryan Shah and Alex Elliott, to reflect on the NDIS Review final report and panel discussion. Aaryan Shah is a member of the Cerebral Palsy Active advocacy group, where young advocates are brought together by Cerebral Palsy Alliance. Alex Elliott works with the Council for Intellectual Disability.

Aaryan asked about how the new role of navigator will help people when they have a problem. Alex asked about how the NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency) will support people with decision making. Minister Shorten wants to see changes in the next 12 months. He wants governments to work together so that people with disability are better supported within the community and in their employment.

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

