ABOUT THE NDIS

More than 300 people affected by multiple sclerosis have met the eligibility for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). They now have a plan that lists the supports and services NDIS fund, personalised to their needs.

The NDIS is a significant shift from the old approach – where organisations received block funding and determined what programs and services will be provided — to the new approach — where people have individual plans and payments through national funding that is based on the principles of the scheme. The insurance principles funnel money into supports and interventions that work and reduce costs over the span of a lifetime.

For example, the Scheme could fund supports like domestic services to assist you maintain your employment, physiotherapy assessment to maintain or improve your mobility and balance — increasing your capacity and reducing the costs of supports and services over your lifetime.

A key determinant of eligibility for the NDIS is that you are under 65 years of age and that the disability/impairment has a substantial impact on your daily life.

TRIAL TIMETABLE AND WHERE THEY ARE HAPPENING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>AGE GROUP IN TRIAL</th>
<th>TRIAL PERIOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIC — Barwon</td>
<td>Under 65 years</td>
<td>July 13 – July 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW — Hunter</td>
<td>Under 65 years</td>
<td>July 13 – July 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA — All</td>
<td>Started with under 5 years</td>
<td>July 13 – July 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expanded to under 13 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS — All</td>
<td>15–24 years</td>
<td>July 13 – July 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT — All</td>
<td>Under 65 years</td>
<td>July 14 – July 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT — Barkly region</td>
<td>Under 65 years</td>
<td>July 14 – July 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA — Perth Hills</td>
<td>Under 65 years Disability Services WA are running a comparison trial called My Way</td>
<td>July 14 – July 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD — All</td>
<td>Not conducting a trial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FULL SCHEME ROLLOUT

The timetable for the rollout of the NDIS across all of Australia will be announced in August / September this year.
The 300 people affected by multiple sclerosis who have become NDIS participants have received a range of supports and services. These vary according to what is “reasonable and necessary” to help them achieve their goals and aspirations. The range of supports, the number of hours and the amount of funding associated with each support item is listed in their NDIS plan. The NDIS plan also lists services received from the mainstream sector (such as healthcare, housing) and informal supports (family, neighbours and friends). Below are some examples of goals and the types of supports and services that may assist a person to achieve different types of goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals related to Living Arrangements</th>
<th>Objectives related to living arrangement goals</th>
<th>Strategies to assist to achieve goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Help give my elderly mum reprieve from caring  
• To be able to maintain living in my home as safely and independently as possible  
• To be able to maintain and maximise quality time with my partner so we can enjoy quality in our life  
• To have my husband as my husband not my carer | • Help me maintain my home  
• To be assisted with home duties  
• To be assisted with shopping and community tasks | • Domestic supports  
• Support to take me shopping  
• Support with the garden and yard  
• Home modifications |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals related Social Participation</th>
<th>Objectives related to Social participation goals</th>
<th>Strategies to assist to achieve goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Participate in family social events, activities and outings  
• I would like to increase my social participation and community access  
• I want to make more friends  
• To continue with my current levels of social and community involvement | • To be able to go to parks, family events, markets with my children  
• I want to visit my mother weekly, have lunch at cafes, join social outings  
• Make more local contact so I can see them more regularly | • Access to suitable mobility assistive equipment to be recommended by Allied Health (Occupational Therapy/physio)  
• NDIA to provide reasonable and necessary supports and transport  
• Join groups such as a church group, interest groups to extend my social network  
• Occupational Therapy driving assessment to ensure licence renewal |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals related to Independence</th>
<th>Objectives related to Independence</th>
<th>Strategies to assist to achieve goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • To stay living in my home as independently possible without others telling me what to do  
• To maintain independence in personal care  
• To maintain independence in my mobility  
• I want to be able to do things for myself and not reply on others | • To stay at home and not have others tell me what to do  
• To ensure I am safe and reduce my risk of falls  
• To increase mobility and confidence to get around more independently  
• Like to participate in everyday tasks | • Maintain medical reviews  
• Accept supports for household chores including: domestic, shopping, food preparation  
• Transport – using taxis to go to appointment  
• Assistive technology  
• Occupational therapy and physiotherapy assessments for recommendations |
NDIS IS MORE THAN A NEW WAY OF FUNDING

NDIS is not just more money for people living with a disability, it is a shift in how supports and services are purchased and decided upon. It will deliver transformation of civic community and Australian society. The transformation will be reflected throughout the whole community care services and sectors.

The vision is for collaboration, integration and streamlining of supports and services across sectors. This will help you be more independent in navigating, planning and establishing a network of support relevant to your individual needs and situation.

This is very relevant and important because often people affected by multiple sclerosis require supports and services from several sectors at any one time.

The diagram below shows how the service sectors are organised and some of the services offered.

An example of how you may be using different service sectors at the same time:
- Health care — regular appointments with your neurologist and/or attending an MS Clinic
- Completing studies at university
- Community — using the local leisure centre to increase your strength and maintain your mobility
- NDIS — (early supports) to assist with fatigue so you can maintain studies, family and social participation
OUR ROLE: MS ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

We will continue to provide engagement activities, to help you understand what’s happening with the NDIS, share what we know and share stories from the trial sites.

We believe it’s important to assist the MS community to understand the impact and opportunities the scheme can provide so you can:

• understand what the NDIS is and how it works
• consider the relevance of NDIS to you now or in the future and explore the potential of how it may impact on your situation
• be ready when the NDIS comes to your area, so you are prepared for the NDIS access process and planning conversation.

SUE’S STORY – HOW NDIS BECAME RELEVANT TO ME

• I was contacted by MS in June 2014 to discuss potential interest and eligibility for NDIS
• The conversation helped me to understand the process, it provided me with the information and support I required.
• At the time I was living well with my multiple sclerosis, working full time, well supported by my family and friends and did not feel that I required any supports or services.
• I kept the information and tools provided.

Over the course of the year I began to experience some physical difficulties and because my job requires me to stand for considerable lengths of time, this became more challenging. I made the decision to reduce my work hours but as I love my job it was important for me to continue to work.

After a conversation with personnel from the MS Clinic and the MS NDIS project officer, who worked through the MS checklist with me, I decided it is now time to approach the NDIA. I needed to determine if I was eligible for funded supports to assist me to maintain and build my strength and allow me to continue to work and participate fully in family life.

I am currently in the process of determining my eligibility for support under Early Intervention as my goal is to continue in my current employment.

I believe that if I receive support early on in the form of a personalised physiotherapy plan, it will assist to manage the weakness in my right side of my body — preventing further deterioration.

FACT OR FICTION: CORRECTING THE MYTHS

• The scheme is means tested
  No, the scheme is not means tested, eligibility is determined by a person’s functional impairment not their income.

• The scheme funds medications
  No, the scheme does not fund medications. Some medications are subsidised by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

• Participants are assessed in a similar way to a Workers Compensation Scheme
  No, there is not an ‘assessment’, there is a conversation with your planner and it is a partnership to discuss and determine the supports you need.
I would be better off keeping my Mobility Allowance than losing it when I become a participant.

Maybe. Your NDIS plan will include any reasonable and necessary transport related funded supports. Once you have a plan with the NDIS your Mobility Allowance will be cancelled with Centrelink but you can keep your Health Care Card if you have one.

There is not enough money for the Scheme to fund supports once it is rolled out across Australia.

No. The scheme is estimated to cost just over $22 billion a year when fully operational in 2019-20. The federal government’s commitment to the NDIS will be partially funded by an increase in the Medicare Levy, which is expected to raise $20.4 billion by 2018-19. The commonwealth, state and territory governments will be contributing the remainder.

WHY SOME PEOPLE AFFECTED BY MS HAVE DECIDED NOT TO ACCESS SUPPORTS

- They have a primary carer and if that changes, will consider the NDIS.
- They do not align to what is perceived as disability. Impairment is more relevant.
- The NDIS feels like it’s very far away and not relevant yet.
- Lack of awareness about the NDIS, have not taken any interest in the topic through the media and communication from MS organisations.

REAL FEEDBACK ABOUT NDIS FROM PEOPLE LIVING WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

“IT has had a huge impact in relieving financial stress and helping me to feel normal and not a burden as I can now get to and from shops and exercise classes with taxi vouchers.”

“The agency was professional and friendly, everything flowed smoothly and I have received everything that I had identified.”

“I am hopeful the increased support may allow more time to invest in my relationship, allowing the luxury of time in the evening to relax and talk to my partner.”

“A weight has been lifted off my shoulders in terms of the future as have no family apart from my elderly mother.”

K is extremely happy with the process, the plan and the people at NDIA. It has been a huge relief for me as I work full time, because I have a mortgage and am on my own. Supports mean I can keep working & contribute to society as it was becoming much harder to work and maintain my home.

H felt that NDIA staff were responsive, good listeners, and she felt acknowledged.
NDIS TWO YEARS ON

Although she commented on the long delay, she realises that it is a big job and that she must be patient.

O is very happy with the support, and feels the agency and the planner have been very helpful, even if they had to amend the plan a few times.

WHAT’S NEXT

We have a huge range of engagement activities planned for the next 12 months, including webinars, information, expos and resources.

Don’t forget to register your email address with us (see below) and watch out for communications from ndis@ms.org.au.

Some of the things coming up are:

- Webinar – Get to know the service sectors, learn about the aged care and disability reforms
- Webinar - Learn about NDIS and hear the experience and impact of the NDIS
- Info and Webinar – Making sense of the NDIS full scheme rollout timetable

DOES YOUR LOCAL MS ORGANISATION HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

To ensure you receive information about future events and receive information promptly please update your details with our MS Connect team:

MS Connect™ (free call): 1800 042 138
Email: msconnect@ms.org.au

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE FOR THE NDIS?

You can learn more about the NDIS and be prepared for when it comes to your area by visiting the NDIS section on www.ms.org.au:

- a breakdown of the who, what, when, where, how and why of NDIS
- common questions and answers
- case studies that provide some insight into the experiences of some people who have become participants of NDIS
- a checklist for people affected by multiple sclerosis. You can work through this checklist any time as it helps to:
  - Prepare your ideas and thoughts about your support network
  - Determine what is important in your life
  - Identify how individual funded supports may assist you
  - Be prepared and ready for any planning

You can also visit www.ndis.gov.au and sign up for their NDIS updates.

ABOUT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS LIMITED (MS)

MS is the pre-eminent source of information, advice and services for people newly diagnosed or living with the disease. We’re a combined entity of ACT, NSW and Victoria with more than 55 years’ insight into how to live well with the disease. While many things have changed over the years our focus remains the same: to help people live their lives with multiple sclerosis and provide them with the best long term options and life outcomes.

Please contact MS for more information:
MS Connect™: 1800 042 138  Email: msconnect@ms.org.au  Web: www.ms.org.au