

Parliamentary Joint Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

Response to Questions Regarding Eligibility and Participation in the NDIS

Who did you first speak to about becoming an NDIS participant?

My GP suggested I should take a look at the NDIS website and use the access checker.

Were you able to easily access all the information you needed about becoming a participant in the NDIS?

I used the NDIS website to familiarise myself with the nature of the scheme and the eligibility for participation.

All of the information on the NDIS website was clearly expressed and rationally laid out. It stands as an exemplar for other government department online information sites.

Did you use My Access Checker?

Yes

What was the process through which your eligibility for the scheme was assessed?

After using My Access Checker I was given a reference number. I used this number when I rang the NDIS head office to express interest in participation. Some weeks later I was contacted regarding an initial interview at the NDIA office in Charlestown NSW. During that interview I was asked about the nature of my disability, its impact on my life and the possible interventions and supports which might be useful in minimising the impact of my disability. I was given some forms with a view to eliciting reports from my GP and relevant specialists.

After returning the reports I was called back for a second interview where the material in the reports was reviewed to get a picture of the impact of my disability on my daily activities and on my family. Particular emphasis was placed on the level of support I had and on the extent to which this might change into the future. In my case this involved looking at the impact of my wife's recent spinal surgery and the degenerative nature of my disability (I have muscular dystrophy).

Is the planning process working effectively?

To say that my experience of the planning process was satisfactory would be an understatement. I have been extremely impressed by the relevance of the questions asked and by the openness of my planner to my input. Given my background it is not uncommon for me to say that the question asked

is the wrong question, and that the better question is..... My planner asked questions which were relevant and searching AND which went to the nature of my disability, its impact and my needs as they relate to that impact. My planner was and is open to my input regarding the form and content of the plan he has drawn up for me. He has shown me that he values my input into decisions regarding my support. I would be happy to supply the committee with the list of questions put to me by my planner.

While most of the supports needed were identified by looking at my obvious disabilities (walking, dressing, housework etc) were decided on straight away, part of the plan drawn up involved input from an Occupational Therapist of my choosing who undertook a review of my lifestyle and mobility and suggested fine tuning the plan. Thus, while it was clear that I needed a new wheelchair and a new walker, the OT bought in equipment specialists to trial different models and to introduce physical aids which proved to be useful in compensating for my physical disability.

How did you identify the service providers that could best deliver the supports you needed?

I have "shopped around". It seemed to me that I needed the input of a very good OT, so I looked for a team of OTs who could team me with one of their therapists. What I was looking for was someone who had expertise but who worked in a collegial environment and was open to input from colleagues.

Part of my plan involves the provision of house cleaning. Having never used such a service I asked my planner to provide a list of providers registered with the NDIA. I made my choice from there on a trial basis and I am happy with my choice. All of the service providers I have chosen have shown a high level of professionalism and responsiveness. Part of my plan involves the supply and fitting of a wheelchair hoist. This will have to wait until later this year when we can purchase a suitable vehicle for such a hoist. I have looked extensively into hoist suitability and have found that there is really only one hoist suitable for effective use and longevity. Fortunately it is locally available!

Michael Lang

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