



# **Australian Government**

Australian Government response to the  
Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) report:

Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the NDIS

February 2023

## **Introduction**

The Australian Government welcomes the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme's (the Committee's) second report in the 46<sup>th</sup> Parliament on Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (the report).

The report looks at new evidence and issues raised since the tabling of the Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS, the scheme) Interim Report on 30 November 2021. The report makes six recommendations. Three of these relate to topics that should be researched, two relate to the dissemination of research, and one relates to how scheme sustainability is measured by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

The Australian Government supports each of the six recommendations made in the Committee's report. The Australian Government also agrees with the Committee in noting the importance of rebuilding trust between the disability community and the NDIS.

The Australian Government is committed to improving the NDIS. The Australian Government is placing a stronger focus on improving the scheme's effectiveness and securing outcomes for participants. Central to this will be meaningful engagement with people with disability, carers, representative organisations, providers, and state and territory governments to improve the scheme.

The Australian Government is committed to transparency and recognises that openness and accountability are critical to rebuilding trust between the NDIS and the disability community. The NDIA regularly publishes data so the scheme can be properly monitored, evaluated, and interrogated, and in order to identify gaps in the current evidence base so more information, data and research can be gathered. The Australian Government recognises that the way in which data and information is released can always be improved, and the NDIA is already working on ways to ensure information published about the scheme is accessible to the broadest possible audience.

To this end, the Australian Government, with the state and territories, is undertaking an independent review of the NDIS (the NDIS Review). The first part of the NDIS Review will look at the design, operations and sustainability of the NDIS. The second part will look at ways to make the market and workforce more responsive, supportive and sustainable. The NDIS Review will consider all available evidence and look at benefits as well as challenges inside and outside the NDIS. The NDIS Review findings will guide the priority areas for improving the scheme.

The following pages provide the Australian Government response to each of the recommendations.

# **Inquiry into the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) report: Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the NDIS**

## **Recommendations made by the Committee**

- 1. The committee recommends that the Australian Government, through the National Disability Insurance Agency or another appropriate body, commission independent research into:**
- **the extent and adequacy of support for people with disability outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme**
  - **best practice early intervention, including supports for children not eligible for the scheme**
  - **effective market stewardship; and**
  - **interfaces with mainstream services.**

### **Supported**

To ensure equitable access and the right support for adults and children with disability, the Australian Government is committed to commissioning quality research that is effectively translated into policy and in delivery settings and is consistent with *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031*.

The topics proposed by the Committee in this recommendation may be considered in the NDIS Review, research and evaluation projects undertaken by the NDIA, and/or the National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP). The NDRP is to be an independent national research and knowledge translation hub for the disability sector, which once fully established, will facilitate a collaborative and inclusive research agenda through partnerships between academics, people with disability, their families, carers and supporters, service providers and governments.

**2. The committee recommends that, as part of its ongoing work to understand National Disability Insurance Scheme costs, Disability Ministers, through the Disability Reform Ministers' Meetings, commission independent research in the following areas:**

- **the drivers underpinning growth in participant numbers**
- **the underlying causes of projected increases of the cost of plans**
- **the impact of National Disability Insurance Agency management approaches; and**
- **the effectiveness of current capacity building supports.**

### **Supported**

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring solutions to problems with the design and operation of the scheme are evidence based. It is important to measure more than just outputs and costs and place a stronger emphasis on understanding outcomes for participants to ensure the scheme is genuinely improving the lives of Australians with disability and their families and carers.

The Australian Government notes that the NDIS Review will consider all available evidence and look at benefits as well as ways to address challenges. The NDIS Review findings will guide Disability Reform Ministers on priority areas for further research and reform, which will include meaningful engagement of people with disability, carers, representative organisations, providers, and other stakeholders.

- 3. The committee recommends that all commissioned independent research into the National Disability Insurance Scheme should, to the greatest extent possible, be published in full.**
- 4. The committee recommends that the National Disability Insurance Agency or other relevant government body commission independent accessible translations or easy-read versions of all published independent research into the National Disability Insurance Scheme.**

### **Supported**

The Australian Government is committed to improving transparency to rebuild trust between the NDIS and people it supports. The Australian Government is committed to publishing independent research into the NDIS and ensuring all published independent research includes independently developed accessible translations or Easy Read versions, where practical.

An important principle is that it is incumbent on all entities undertaking research into the NDIS to ensure outcomes of their research are published to the fullest extent possible in formats that are accessible to people with disability. The NDIA continues to provide accessible online content, including published data, to assist people with disabilities to actively participate in society and enable better information design outcomes for all.

**5. The committee recommends that the National Disability Insurance Agency, with the Scheme Actuary and Board, review methods and approaches to managing the financial sustainability of the scheme to ensure appropriate emphasis is placed on measuring the benefits of the scheme and promoting these benefits to the broader Australian community.**

### **Supported**

The Australian Government notes the NDIS Review provides an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the NDIS to achieve outcomes for participants and be sustainable so that future generations can also benefit from the NDIS.

The NDIA is committed to facilitating improved outcomes of economic and social independence and delivering a quality service for participants and their families, carers and providers. Since the inception of the NDIS, the NDIA has been gathering data to better understand how the scheme is making a difference and using this data to identify areas where improvements may be needed. The NDIA will continue to develop a robust evidence base to empower participants to make informed decisions about the best ways to spend their supports.

**6. The committee recommends that the Australian Government and Disability Ministers commission independent research into the broader contribution of the National Disability Insurance Scheme to the Australian economy, including research into measuring the economic benefits of the scheme.**

### **Supported**

The Australian Government recognises the significant benefits of the scheme to participants and the wider community, including its significant contributions to the Australian economy.

The Australian Government notes the NDIS Review will consider the effectiveness and sustainability of the scheme, including the achievement of meaningful participant employment and lifetime outcomes and broader social and economic benefits, through the provision of reasonable and necessary supports.