National Disability Insurance Agency

Incoming Minister Brief

The contents of this document are OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE

1. Welcome to the Minister

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS now supports more than 717,000 participants and we look forward to working with you and your office to provide better and fairer outcomes for every person who is participating in this world-leading scheme.

Your appointment comes during a very significant period of reform, to be delivered over the next 5 years, across not just the NDIS, but the broader disability ecosystem. In October 2024, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) began to operationalise new laws passed by the Parliament with bipartisan support, which represents the biggest change to the Scheme since it was introduced in 2013.

The NDIS is being reformed to deliver better outcomes for people with disability, to make the Scheme more responsive to individual needs, and for decision making to be more consistent, equitable and transparent.

The successful implementation of the reform agenda is complex and will be challenging but is essential to ensuring the Scheme's long-term sustainability and achieving National Cabinet's agreed annual growth target of 8% from 1 July 2026.

We are already seeing Scheme growth stabilising as the impact of reforms to date take effect.

The latest data shows that, as at the end of March 2025, annual growth is at 10.6% – a significant reduction from the annual growth rates of more than 20% experienced in recent years. This will have a significant cost saving.

The most recent NDIS Annual Financial Sustainability Report shows reforms to the NDIS will reduce Scheme growth by more than $19.3 billion over the next 4 years.

The centrepiece is the implementation of New Framework Planning, recommended by the Independent Review of the NDIS (NDIS Review), expected to deliver a more sustainable Scheme and more transparent, fairer and equitable outcomes for participants through consistent strengths-based assessments and more flexible budgets.

Because of the significant scale and complexity, New Framework Planning will be implemented progressively. s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

This builds on other elements of the reform program which improve the processes for participant planning and eligibility, improve early intervention outcomes for children, and strengthen fraud and integrity capability.

This is a significant program of reform, across not just the NDIS, but the broader disability ecosystem. The change impact will be felt deeply s47C - deliberative processes [redacted] particularly over the next 2-3 years as the most significant changes roll out.

The Agency will continue its proactive engagement and education with people with disability, Scheme participants, their families and the broader disability community so they understand the change and its impacts.

s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]. An example is the action which calls for 'participants who need 24/7 living supports being generally funded at a 1:3 support ratio'. This recommendation has caused much angst in the disability community, as it has brought back fears of returning to the group homes of the past.

The disability community also does not support the Governments timeline for NDIS reforms however, it is critical the Agency remain on the timeline if we are to achieve National Cabinet's annual 8% growth target. The scale of change also has the potential to be challenging for some cohorts. The NDIA will continue to work with the disability community to smooth out any unintended consequences of the reforms and make the transition to New Framework Planning as seamless as possible.

s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

The NDIA is committed to implementing the reform program and meeting the annual growth target despite key dependencies and ongoing pressures such as workforce and technology capability.

The Agency will brief you on the complexities and challenges of meeting the reform agenda and will work with you on mitigating these risks to ensure the benefits of the reform program are realised.

As the reform agenda is rolled out, the voices of people with disability will continue to be at the heart of any changes to the NDIS.

The reforms were designed to directly address the concerns and lived experiences expressed to the Independent Review of the NDIS (NDIS Review) and Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission).

The Agency remains deeply committed to co-designing these reform activities and is hearing from more people with greater diversity. This engagement has already helped shape the development and implementation of the NDIS Support Lists and the Replacement Supports Lists in 2024, and a range of guidelines to support all NDIS participants in the changes relevant to them.

The NDIA's co-design approach ensures people with disability and their families are involved in how processes are designed and implemented, and how decisions are made. The Agency will continue to listen to feedback from people within the disability community on how changes are practically working on the ground, and is committed to refining, improving, and making sure the process is as seamless as possible.

The NDIA is also fortunate to have a committed and passionate workforce which puts participants at the centre of everything we do. Indeed, 22% of staff report living with disability—the highest percentage across Australian Public Service (APS) agencies.

The NDIA CEO, Board and staff will all work with you to develop your priorities and direction for the Agency, the Scheme and the broader ecosystem. You will be invited to the next Board meeting to be held on 19 June 2025.

The subsequent sections of this brief provide information about the various programs of work currently underway, including key decisions and opportunities.

2. Your first 100 days

2.1. Deep dives

The NDIA will schedule a proposed series of deep dive sessions with you and your office in the coming weeks on the following topics:

- Scheme reform program including New Framework Planning
- Co-design and engagement
- Scheme growth, sustainability and pricing
- Mainstream interfaces
- Fraud and integrity.

2.2. Key meetings, decisions and announcement opportunities

Topic	Key Date	Page No.
Quarter 3 2024–25 Quarterly Report to disability ministers	15 May 2025	42
Updated NDIA Corporate Plan 2024–25	May 2025	42
Invitation to speak with the NDIA Board at their next meeting (virtual)	19 June 2025	6, 35
2024–25 Annual Pricing Review and Independent Pricing Committee Review	June 2025	24
NDIA Board meeting (Alice Springs)	24 July 2025	35
Quarter 4 2024–25 Quarterly Report to disability ministers	14 August 2025	42
2024–25 Annual Financial Sustainability Report	December 2025	10, 42

2.3. Participant story - the NDIS' impact

Since 2013, the NDIS has been making a significant impact in the lives of Australians with a disability, enabling them to achieve greater independence, access new skills and enjoy a fuller life. The following participant story is one example of this, highlighting the purpose and benefit of the NDIS.

With sheer determination and the right supports, Mackay NDIS participant [redacted] has achieved his goal of finding and securing work – and he could not be happier.

Working 3 days a week preparing and delivering catalogues, the 18-year-old, who has level 3 autism, an intellectual disability and obsessive-compulsive disorder, is filled with pride and purpose in a job helping him to build his skills and independence.

[redacted] used his NDIS funding to engage a disability support provider. They linked him to [redacted], a local area coordinator, who worked with him to get to know his likes, dislikes, interests and strengths.

[redacted] said [redacted] made it clear all he wanted to do was work, so they started looking for jobs he liked and would feel comfortable doing as well as help build his confidence, skills and independence.

Seeing a catalogue delivery job advertised, [redacted] supported [redacted] to apply, and he was successful. 'For [redacted] the structured role plays to his strengths, and he's really found a sense of pride and purpose in what he's doing,' [redacted] said.

'[redacted] started out sorting and delivering catalogues one day a week, but as his confidence grew, his hours did too. Now he's working 20 hours a week over 3 days!'

Dedicated to his job, [redacted] walks 26 kilometres a week, which is also improving his health. [redacted]'s mum [redacted] marvels at her son's determination and strong work ethic. She credits much of his success to NDIS funding and the support he's had from his disability support provider.

'[redacted] is much happier working. He sees his father and brother go to work, so for him the natural progression was to go to work too,' [redacted] said.

'Even though he can't read or write, he's found a job he can do, he's good at, and he enjoys. We are very proud of what he has been able to achieve.

'The progress [redacted] has made is just incredible. This job has given him a new sense of purpose, and it's fantastic to see how much it's helped to boost his confidence.'

3. Scheme reforms

3.1. Context

- The NDIS was legislated in 2013 and was fully rolled out across Australia by 2020. Today, the NDIS provides life-changing support to over 717,000 adults and children with disability.

- It was set up as a world-first approach to disability support by putting people with disability at the centre of decision-making, through the principles of reasonable and necessary supports and individual choice and control. The NDIS was designed to complement, not replace, other services for which the states and territories are responsible.

- While there continues to be widespread support for the original intent of the Scheme, issues arose as the NDIS matured, around the financial sustainability of the Scheme; balancing participants' choice and control with appropriate guardrails; provider markets and access; and fraud or overcharging by disability providers.

- In response to these issues, in 2022, all governments agreed to an Independent Review of the NDIS (NDIS Review) which looked at the design, operations and sustainability of the NDIS, with an overarching goal to put people with disability back at the centre of the NDIS.

- The NDIS Review final report delivered in December 2023 envisioned a unified ecosystem which ensures people with disability receive the right support at the right time and recommended additional support for all people with disability to navigate this ecosystem.

- The need for change was also reflected in the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) final report.

- Whilst the Scheme continues to remain demand-driven, in 2023, National Cabinet agreed to moderate Scheme growth with an annual growth target of 8% from 1 July 2026.

- The NDIA is acutely aware NDIS reforms have an impact on the broader disability ecosystem like the impact broader health and social reforms have on the Scheme. Complementary reforms are needed outside of the NDIS to deliver a continuum of support for people with disability.
- A stronger disability ecosystem will relieve pressure on the Scheme and provide better outcomes for people with disability.

3.2. Scheme sustainability

- Scheme expenses increase due to many factors, such as increased number of participants, normal inflationary sources (such as increases in wages and consumer prices), as well as real growth in payments over and above the normal inflationary sources.
- While the Scheme now operates in all regions of Australia, it remains relatively immature. The numbers of participants entering the Scheme each year have not stabilised, and growth in expenses for participant supports continue to grow at a rate higher than general inflation.
- Subsequently, the size and cost of NDIS has increased at a rate not envisioned when it was established, with annual growth rates of more than 20% experienced in recent years.
- While pressures on the financial sustainability of the Scheme remain, design and implementation of Scheme reforms has commenced, seeking to bring the NDIS back to its original intent and resulting in the stabilisation of projected Scheme expenses.
- Collectively, the reforms, which include legislative amendments, Agency operational changes and a more cohesive ecosystem of support inside and outside of the NDIS, all include a focus of improving the financial sustainability of the Scheme.
- Part of this work, progressed in collaboration with the disability community, has led to a moderation in plan inflation, stabilisation in numbers of participants accessing Supported Independent Living supports for the first time, and increased numbers of participants leaving the Scheme as their support needs stabilise, including children who leave the Scheme after achieving their goals.
- The NDIS 2023–24 Annual Financial Sustainability Report (AFSR) highlighted the current Scheme reform trajectory is improving the financial sustainability, and its projections build on the positive trends in NDIS cost stabilisation including:

  - Scheme expenses to considerably improve for the 12 months to 30 June 2025, to approximately $500 million less than the 2024–25 Budget estimate

  - growth in Scheme expenses expected to be 12.0% in 2024–25, 8.4% in 2025–26 and 6.7% in 2026–27. Estimated Scheme expenditure is $46.9 billion for 2024–25, and $210.3 billion for the 4-year period to 30 June 2028.

  - fewer participants at risk of overspending their plans. These results show the Agency is improving the financial sustainability of the NDIS, to not only deliver a fairer and more consistent Scheme for participants, but ensure it is here to stay in the future.

- Data at the end of March 2025 shows year-on-year Scheme growth was at 10.6%, with the NDIA on track to meet the 8% annual growth target. Significant work to provide more clarity around what can be included in NDIS plans, manage over-spending of plans, and stop fraud and exploitation of participants has helped to stabilise growth.

3.3. Reform is underway

- The NDIA is leading a significant program of reform, designed with the disability community, to implement recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Review and to lift the NDIA's capability, capacity and systems to better support participants.

- Recent reforms have ensured the NDIA is getting better at managing plan growth, by providing clarity on what NDIS funding can and cannot be used for and ensuring every NDIS dollar goes towards participant outcomes.

- While new legislation, passed by the Parliament with bipartisan support, establishes a platform for much of this important work, the NDIA has been implementing other measures designed to strengthen the NDIS and provide a better experience for all participants and their families.

- The main components of the reform program are:

  - needs-based New Framework Planning which focuses on a persons' needs rather than their functional capacity, and puts guardrails around budget-setting to prevent participants overspending their NDIS plans

- introduction of a national workforce of navigators who will help people to navigate the complexities of the disability ecosystem, including the NDIS, to access the support and services they need. This will replace the existing Partners in the Community model

- a new early intervention pathway to support children younger than 9 with developmental delay or disability.

- These vital forthcoming reforms reinforce and work alongside important reforms already in place including:

  - providing greater clarity to participants through the introduction of a definition of NDIS supports - supports which can be funded by the NDIS and clarifying those that cannot. This clarification is supporting participants to spend their NDIS funds appropriately

  - bolstering the integrity of the Scheme through investment in the multi-agency Fraud Fusion Taskforce and NDIA's Crack Down on Fraud program to ensure every dollar of NDIS funding goes towards participant outcomes.

- This work is being progressed in collaboration with people with disability and the wider disability community.

- Co-design with the disability community is directly influencing the participant experience design for the New Framework Planning. There are important themes emerging about better standards in communication, data quality and information sharing, helping support participant safety and staff capability.

- Participant feedback has already led to improvements in the participant experience:

  - Through engagement on **participant plans and plan approval letters**, participants told the Agency they wanted clearer information about NDIS supports in their plans and how they can use and find information in their plan. The NDIA trialled co-producing the plan and letters directly with participants in workshops, leading to an improved plan layout, increased accessibility and vastly easier to use resources. Participants valued being included in plan design, and the process highlighted how co-design could improve NDIA artefacts and communications. These artefacts were introduced in mid-2024.

- Co-designing with participants on **Funding periods** highlighted**,** participants would value more proactive check-ins for support, including how they are using their funding. This is to offset their fears that services and supports would be cut off. Listening to this feedback, the NDIA is building participant check-ins into the process if there is risk of over or under-spend in a funding period. This will help ensure continuity of supports for participants and alleviate concerns raised in co-design.

- Through engagement with the disability community on the **new definition of NDIS supports**, the NDIA heard participants wanted clarity on what they could claim if it was balanced with participant choice and control. Undertaking rapid design with Disability Representative and Carers Organisations (DRCOs) and Participant First, who help improve the NDIS through engagement activities, the NDIA co-designed a 'replacement supports' process, and collaborated extensively with the disability community on forms, letters and the participant experience. Consultation also led to easy read and Auslan versions of the support lists, improving accessibility for participants.

- For **consent**, participants highlighted the terms the NDIA uses are confusing. In collaboration with participants, nominees and family members, the NDIA is now making the consent process simpler and easier to understand.

- Through **conflict-of-interest** co-design, participants and providers said they wanted more information to understand and navigate conflicts of interest, including unavoidable conflicts. Participant and provider engagement has enabled the NDIA to update resources to help address these pain points.

- For **Eligibility Reassessments** (ER), participants told the NDIA they wanted more time to respond to reassessment requests, greater transparency on procedural fairness practices, a more empathic message and improved accessibility in the letters being sent to participants. Working closely with DRCOs and participants, the NDIA has increased ER timeframes for response from 28 days to 90 days, and co-produced letter updates to improve their language, tone and clarity for procedural fairness.

3.4. New Framework Planning

- New Framework Planning is a new framework for informing and implementing the budgets within participants' NDIS plans. Staged rollout will commence from 1 September 2025 with the implementation of a Notice of Impairment.
- Historically, a NDIS participant's plan has been developed based on an assessment of a persons' functional capacity (that is, what they cannot do) which results in inconsistent decision-making and, while plans can be very complex with multiple support categories, for many participants there are limited guardrails on spending their plan funding.
- The New Framework Planning moves to a model based on what a person needs to be able to live fully; and results in a simplified NDIS plan with set funding periods. The introduction of funding periods, which define how often a participant can access a portion of their total budget, will help avoid plan inflation while maintaining participants choice and control.
- It is based on the NDIS Review which recommended a more structured approach to planning to deliver better and fairer outcomes for NDIS participants, including a new planning framework and the introduction of a support needs assessment. Together, these represent a significant and complex package of work.
- The new approach will feature a consistent needs-based assessment process to set budgets at a whole-of-person level, leading to more fairness and transparency in decision making.
- Budgets will be based primarily on support needs and intensity, which in turn is intrinsically more person-centred and strengths-based than the functional assessments and deficit-based approach used currently.
- The New Framework Planning will:
  - streamline the planning process and improve the overall experience for participants
  - help to ensure fairer and more consistent supports for people with similar needs
  - make it easier for participants to spend in accordance with their plan, because they will know how much funds they have, the amount for each component, and how long the funds need to last.

- The major component in implementing the new framework is the introduction of support needs assessment tools, which will provide a comprehensive assessment of a participant's needs. This will ensure participants receive the right level of support to enhance their overall wellbeing and independence.

- In February 2025, the NDIA released approaches to market to initiate the progressive selection of needs assessment tools. Separate needs assessment tools will be needed for adults and children, as well as specific tools for supports such as assistive technology and home modifications.

- These approaches to market will enable the progressive selection and procurement of support needs assessment tools. The Agency will continue to design, test and discuss with people with disability to ensure the tools are fit-for-purpose and account for the diverse experiences and needs of people with disability.

- From 1 September 2025, the first stage of New Framework Planning will be rolled out with the implementation of a Notice of Impairment for existing NDIS participants. This will require a specific Notice of Impairment Rule to be made prior to commencement of the roll out.

- The Notice of Impairment is a contemporary record to provide clarity and transparency for participants of the categories of their impairments which meet Scheme access requirements, and for which they receive Scheme funding.

- The Agency anticipates a high volume of participants will request variations to ensure their impairments are recorded correctly.

- Implementation of Notice of Impairment is a critical step in the reform pathway and underpins successful implementation of the new model.

3.5. Navigators

- The NDIS Review highlighted the challenges people with disability face in identifying and accessing supports. It recommended a streamlined navigator role to provide additional support for all people with disability to navigate the complex disability ecosystem, including mainstream supports, Foundational Supports and the NDIS.

- The introduction of the navigator role is critical to achieving more equitable outcomes and ensuring people with disability find the right support at the right time and can smoothly transition in and out of support systems, including between Foundational Supports and the NDIS. This will reduce reliance on the NDIS over time.

- The NDIA will pilot a navigation function over the next 2 years and will engage with you on the design of the navigation function and throughout the progress of the pilot. It is anticipated the navigation function will commence from July 2027.

- The NDIA is undertaking design and co-design activities to deliver a more effective and seamless navigation experience for people with disability, supporting the uptake of Foundational Supports and reducing the reliance on the NDIS.

3.6. New early intervention pathway for children

- Complementary reforms are needed within and outside the NDIS to deliver a continuum of support for children and their families.

- The NDIS Review found access to the NDIS for children is inconsistent, inequitable and not based on need. It recommended the pathway for all children under the age of 9 to enter the NDIS under early intervention requirements (with assurance for children with clear lifelong support needs that their eligibility would continue beyond age 9 under disability requirements).

- The NDIS Review also recommended children who are eligible for the NDIS receive a budget based on support needs, determined through child-centred assessments, early intervention supports for children should be required to be based on best practice principles and evidence, and the Agency should develop a better approach for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of early intervention for children.

- The NDIA is working with families with lived experience, experts, and the disability community to design and consult on a new early intervention pathway to better support children younger than 9 and their families. This includes the establishment of the Children's Expert Advisory Group which provides strategic and technical expert advice on responding to the needs of children with disability and/or developmental delay.

- Elements of the pathway design include:
  - s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]
  - assessment of support needs tailored to children for early intervention which would enable benefit, to reduce or resolve the impact of the impairment on functioning as appropriate, as well as capacity building support for families, where relevant

  - early intervention supports based on best practice principles and evidence, through market and regulatory design
  - better monitoring of early intervention support and progress towards the intended benefit or outcome and clear points of reassessment.

- Children have been identified as a priority cohort for the roll out of Foundational Supports by states and territories from 2025. It is important the development of the new NDIS early intervention pathway for children and Foundational Supports are designed in such a way that a continuum is created which ensures children with disability or experiencing delayed development, and their families, can access the right service at the right time.

- s47C - deliberative processes, s34 Cabinet document [redacted]

3.7. Co-design and engagement

- People with disability have sent a clear message to Government: nothing about us without us. The NDIA is committed to working with people with disability and the wider disability community to improve the NDIS.

- The NDIA's commitment to co-designing with people with disability was enshrined in legislation on 1 July 2022, and is reflected in the shared statement on co-design, released in partnership with the Independent Advisory Council (IAC) and DRCOs.

- The NDIA has an extensive co-design and engagement program underway. This includes the operation of a number of standing co-design working groups jointly chaired by disability sector and the Agency, sessions with DRCOs, IAC, focus groups with participants and other key reference and advisory groups.

- The current co-design program is focused on reforms being introduced and implemented in 2025, across 4 co-design working groups:

  - Assessments and Budgeting.
  - Navigators.
  - Participant Pathway Experience.
  - Participant Safeguarding.

3.8. Risks and challenges of reform

- Both the NDIA and the NDIS has been through a period of significant change since mid-2022. This period of significant change is expected to continue until mid-2028 when the transition to New Framework Planning will reach a peak for implementation and the Agency returns to a period of stabilisation before tapering to business as usual in early 2031.
- The significant reform agenda poses some challenges due to the volume of reforms, timeframes for delivery, and the Agency's capacity to design, deliver and manage change.
- s47C - deliberative processes, s34 Cabinet document [redacted]
- s34 Cabinet document, s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]
- The overall status of the Scheme reform program is 'on track' to commence the staged transition to New Framework Planning from September 2025. A key step in this process occurred in February 2025, when the NDIA released an approach to market for support needs assessment tools for adults, and an industry consultation process about how to best understand support needs for children and specific kinds of support funded by the NDIS.
- There are, however, significant dependencies in the critical path, including states and territories must agree the legislative instrument ('Rule'). Further dependences prior to implementation are:
  - outcome of **support needs assessment tools** procurement.
  - **experience design** for participants, staff, partners, providers and other impacted stakeholders.
  - s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

  - **workforce planning** and recruitment to deliver New Framework Planning. Work is underway on modelling workforce requirements for implementing new framework and current state planning workforces concurrently.

- The NDIA is committed to implementing the reform program and meeting the annual growth target despite key dependencies and ongoing pressures such as workforce and technology capability.

- A phased delivery approach will provide the NDIA maximum flexibility to respond to operational and other contingencies and allow for transition numbers to scale in line with the Agency's ability to deliver New Framework Planning and allows for concurrent design work to happen on later elements of the program.

3.9. Next steps

- Phased implementation of New Framework Planning will commence from 1 September 2025, with the roll-out of Notice of Impairment. Subsequent implementation will be staged across the next 1-3 years.

- The Agency will brief you on what 'day 1' will look like for participants and other impacted stakeholders and provide you a suggested handling approach.

- s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

- We will also provide briefing on the full staged rollout, including the complexities and challenges of meeting the reform agenda and will work with you on mitigating these risks to ensure the benefits of the reform program are realised.

4. Operational issues

4.1. Critical budget issues

Issue

- The NDIA has laid significant foundations to deliver on the recommendations of the NDIS Review, started implementing the *NDIS Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No.1) Act 2024*, and made significant steps towards achieving National Cabinet's 8% annual growth target from 1 July 2026.

- Long-term funding certainty is required to maintain the current sustainability trajectory and high-quality service delivery to participants.

- The NDIA is currently funded year-on-year and, as a result, faces significant budget challenges which, if not addressed, will hinder ongoing reforms and the level of service delivery. These challenges include:

  - insufficient future funding for service delivery and enabling operations

  - funding uncertainty for current reforms and efficiencies underway (including future investment in fraud and integrity activities)

  - additional investment requirements for the frontline workforce.

- Continued investment is required to enable the NDIA to implement and operationalise recent reforms to continue the current trajectory to meet the 8% annual growth target from 1 July 2026.

- Without sustained funding, current efficiencies and savings will be lost and directly impact the NDIA's ability to achieve the target. Decreased Agency efficiency and increased cost inefficiencies will also put at risk any sustainability progress gained to date.

s47E(d) - certain operations of agencies

Stakeholder impacts

s47C - deliberative processes

- Long-term funding certainty is needed for the Agency to build its workforce capability, better support participants through the planning and engagement process, and ensure the benefits of the reform program are realised.

- Investment is needed to ensure reform programs create efficiencies, and activities, such as fraud and integrity activities, are delivered for the benefit of participants and Scheme sustainability.

Next steps

- s47C - deliberative processes

4.2. Workforce Impact

Issue

- Implementation of Scheme reforms will have a significant impact on the Agency's frontline workforce. The NDIA will be required to undertake new functions, meaning the core operational activities of the frontline must be redesigned to support a new participant pathway while at the same time ensuring business as usual can be maintained and sustainability targets are met.

- s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

- s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

- The Agency has proposed a 5-year workforce transition to enable implementation of New Framework Planning. Through the 2024–25 MYEFO process, the Agency secured $280 million for 1,000 new Support Needs Assessors and funding to ready the Agency for workforce transformation. This funding is an initial investment in year 1 only; and the Agency will work with you to seek further funding to support workforce transformation across years 2 to 5.

- Participant expectations captured through the Independent Review of the NDIS (NDIS Review) and the Agency Co-Design Working Groups has informed, and will continue to inform, this work.

- Through recent co-design meetings, participants proposed frontline capabilities including a contemporary knowledge of disability, critical thinking, effective communication, trauma informed practice, and cultural responsiveness.

Stakeholder impacts

- There is significant industrial complexity, with current Partner employees engaged across a broad range of industrial arrangements and providers. The design of the new navigator function will anticipate industrial transitions across these workforces, including potentially current Agency workforces.

- Bringing current staff and the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) on this change journey will also be a key consideration. The Agency is working on a detailed change and engagement plan to support this.

- In addition to workforce requirements for New Framework Planning, Partners in the Community retain a critical function in maintaining current state planning through the transition period. Careful consideration needs to be given to all levers available: contracting arrangements, pricing, and regulation during the transition. This includes risk-mitigation measures to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of service to participants throughout the transformation process.

NDIS workforce opportunities

- Workforce transformation presents a unique and critical opportunity to diversify the workforce to better reflect the Australian population, and to ensure lived experience and cultural safety for First Nations participants are fundamental features of the Agency workforce and participant experience.

- Currently, 22% of NDIA staff report living with disability—the highest percentage across Australian Public Service (APS) agencies. Some areas of the Agency, such as the National Contact Centre, have achieved significantly improved recruitment and retention rates for people with disability. There is an important opportunity to embed these recruitment practices to ensure the investment in workforce expansion accelerates disability recruitment in the Agency.

- Implementing New Framework Planning also provides an opportunity to build a workforce that is more culturally safe for First Nations participants. This requires an integrated approach, including upskilling non-Indigenous people to work with First Nations participants and continuing to build a strong First Nations workforce.

Next steps and timing

- s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

4.3. Annual Pricing Review and the NDIA pricing approach

Issue

- NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits (previously the NDIS Price Guide) assist participants and disability support providers in understanding how price controls for supports and services work in the NDIS. Price regulation is in place to ensure participants receive value for money in the supports they receive.

- NDIS price limits are set by the NDIA Board. When the pricing model was established at the commencement of the NDIS, it was expected the market would support a range of price points based on usual demand factors (such as quality and availability). s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

- The Annual Pricing Review (APR) and the associated setting and publishing of NDIS price limits is the NDIA's main tool for shaping provider markets. It is critical in ensuring a sustainable NDIS provider market that can deliver supports to participants, while enforcing Scheme sustainability.

- The NDIA Board sets price limits of a range of disability supports and services through the APR process. A range of initiatives and measures are underway to inform and improve the approach to setting prices for NDIS providers. These include:

  - the establishment of the Independent Pricing Committee (IPC) in September 2024, to review NDIS pricing approaches, and recommend changes to the NDIA Board, to improve the quality of supports and ensure sustainable disability provider markets

  - the Quality Supports Program that enhances service specification for participants and informs future pricing and market approaches, ensuring NDIS participants have access to high quality supports. The program has initiated two 12-month pilot programs focusing on support coordination and supported independent living. The 2 pilots program launched in early 2025, will help the Agency understand the range of supports required for different levels of participant need, and in turn, how to price supports to enhance quality service provision.

- The NDIS Review recommended to reform the NDIS pricing and payments framework and transition responsibility for advising Government on suitable indicators of the market price and price caps to the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA).

- In response, the Government invested $5.3 million in 2024–25 for IHACPA to work with the Department of Social Services (as the then-disability policy lead) and the NDIA to undertake initial work to reform NDIS pricing arrangements, including reviewing existing pricing approaches and developing a pricing data strategy. Noting there are risks associated with transitioning pricing away from NDIA which would need to be carefully managed.

- The NDIS Disability Support Worker Cost Model determines most price limits for assistance with daily living supports, and social, community and economic participation supports (and some capacity building supports).

- s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

- The provisional decision for the FWC's gender-based undervaluation wage review into priority awards (external) was announced on 16 April 2025. s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

- NDIS provider representative organisations have been lobbying for increases in price limits for disability support, therapy and intermediaries. There is always a risk providers withdraw from the market where price limits are deemed to be inadequate. However, the NDIA monitors market dynamics as part of setting annual price limits and notes the current rate of registered providers leaving the market remains relatively stable.

- s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

Stakeholder impacts

- Quality outcomes for participants can only be achieved when there is a quality provider market. The APR process and setting NDIS pricing arrangements is crucial to ensuring a sustainable provider market to deliver supports to NDIS participants.

Next steps and timing

- The IPC's final report will explore strategic reforms and medium-term pricing approaches to improve market sustainability and ensure participants continue to receive quality supports. The Agency will welcome the opportunity to brief you on the IPC final report and the Board's pricing approach for 2025–26, likely stakeholder impacts and suggested handling approach.

4.4. NDIS fraud and integrity activities

Issue

- There is an ongoing focus on increasing safety and outcomes for participants by embedding integrity into the NDIS at every opportunity, to ensure it operates effectively for those it is intended to support. This work is also critical for the financial sustainability of the Scheme and to maintain community confidence.
- Fraud and integrity activities focus on increasing safety and outcomes for participants by improving the integrity of providers and the NDIS, making it easier to get it right and harder to get it wrong.
- The NDIS is the most complex payment program in Australia, processing over 500,000 claims per day, totalling over $100 million. This is the highest claim volume per day of any Government program, except Medicare. The NDIS also processes the broadest range of claims from the largest provider cohort in the country.
- While a minority of claimants are responsible for the most serious fraud and non-compliance, integrity risks are negatively impacting the entire Scheme and its ongoing sustainability. Given the scale and scope of NDIS claims and providers, the community expects the full range of compliance and enforcement interventions to assure the integrity of the NDIS.
- The NDIA is increasing safety and outcomes for NDIS participants by improving integrity and reducing fraud through the multi-agency Fraud Fusion Taskforce and Crack Down on Fraud program. The Agency also works to educate participants about fraud, especially how to know it, spot it and report it. Understanding fraud will support participants protect to their NDIS plans.
- This year has already seen increased activity, from education to prosecutions, to reduce the critical vulnerabilities that impact participant safety and Scheme sustainability. Some of these interventions will also be supported by Fraud Fusion Taskforce member agencies.
- The focus on embedding integrity into the NDIS will be reinforced through every element of Scheme reform, including improved governance, new supports needs assessment and participant pathways, workforce initiatives, and ongoing engagement with the disability sector in design and implementation. It is also important to note there are many integrity vulnerabilities that can only be effectively addressed through further legislative reform.

Background

- Through the multi-agency Fraud Fusion Taskforce and the NDIA's Crack Down on Fraud program, the NDIA has identified over 19,000 NDIS participants who may have been impacted by fraudulent providers, and supported thousands to transition to safer arrangements, including changing providers.

- The Fraud Fusion Taskforce, co-led by the NDIA and Services Australia has 23 member agencies, including the Australian Taxation Office, Australian Securities and Investments Commission, and the Australian Federal Police. It works to find and stop fraud against Government programs, like the NDIS, and includes intelligence sharing, prosecution and other regulatory actions.

- Over the past 9 months, the Fraud Fusion Taskforce has executed more than 60 warrants on individuals and entities suspected of defrauding millions of dollars from the NDIS. This includes cases of significant unexplained wealth, including multi-million-dollar houses, luxury cars and high-end watches.

- Currently, 78 active investigations of potential fraud against the NDIS are underway. This includes losses across the spectrum, including general misuse, opportunistic fraud and sophisticated syndicated fraud.

- This whole-of-government work is complemented by the Agency's Crack Down on Fraud program, which is strengthening fraud prevention, detection and response. The program has implemented a range of measures to improve the integrity of the claiming process for participants with self-managed NDIS plans.

- The Crack Down on Fraud program is already estimated to save the NDIS over $1.3 billion in benefits across the forward estimates (1 July 2024 to 30 June 2028). This includes $399 million in savings to the NDIS and an additional $918 million in payments diverted away from problematic integrity providers.

- This financial year (to 31 March 2025), the NDIA has received more than 22,000 tip-offs of potential fraud or non-compliance with the NDIS.

Next steps

- You will be provided with an in-depth briefing on the NDIA's fraud and integrity programs, and the Agency will work with you to develop options for funding proposals to enable the NDIA to continue to transform core systems and improve the integrity of the NDIS.

- Briefings will be provided on specific law enforcement activities.

4.5. Debt management

Issue

- It is likely you will receive representations from the disability community with concerns about the Agency's debt management approach. Debt management is a sensitive topic within the Australian community and especially the disability community.

- During 2024, focus shifted to payment integrity, stopping non-compliant claims before they are paid and reducing the reliance on debt raising. However, the ability to raise debts is still required by the Agency.

- The NDIA has also put in place a process for 'Agency initiated' debts to ensure debts against a participant require endorsement from the Strategic Leadership Team Debt Panel which includes the Chief Executive Officer.

- The integrity of the NDIS is vital for Scheme sustainability. The Agency has the power to recover a debt from a participant or provider who has received NDIS funding they are not entitled to.

- Using fair and transparent debt management practices, to recover money following incorrect NDIS claiming, helps maintain the financial sustainability of the Scheme and is a necessary part of good public sector financial management.

- A range of NDIS debt management improvements are currently underway, including a review of open and historical debts to ensure debt determination, administration, management and recovery processes conform with recent legislation changes and other legislative requirements.

Stakeholder impacts

- The NDIA is engaging with participants who self-manage their NDIS plan to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities for submitting compliant claims.

- There are safeguards to ensure compliance and debt management practices are fair and carefully considered, such as opportunities to the individual to provide substantiating evidence, which is considered by the above groups.

Next steps and timing

- s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

4.6. Partners in the Community

Issue

- Partners in the Community (Partners) organisations are the primary contact for NDIS participants in their local area. They help people apply to the NDIS, implement their NDIS plan, and check in to monitor progress. Partners also support people with disability who are not NDIS participants, including children, their families and carers, to connect to mainstream and community services.

- The NDIS Review proposed changes to the way supports and services are delivered, including the services provided by Partners. Work has commenced to design a future navigator service, to provide additional support for all people with disability to navigate the disability ecosystem, in line with recommendations from the NDIS Review.

- Agreements with Partners delivering early childhood and local area coordination services are due to expire on 30 June 2025. The NDIA Board approved an extension of current Partner agreements by 2 years, to 30 June 2027, to ensure continued connections and support for NDIS participants, while NDIS reforms are underway.

- s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

- s47C - deliberative processes [redacted]

Participant impacts

- Extending Partner agreements will mean over 70% of NDIS participants will receive continued support from their existing early childhood or local area coordinator.

- Participants will have increased choice of coordination within Partners, through strengthened requirements and will experience improvements to partner service delivery as performance targets increase over time.

Stakeholder impacts

- s47C - deliberative processes

- Partners may provide feedback about their ability to deliver services for a growing participant cohort within similar levels. Partners may also seek to meet with you, to discuss their views on the proposed extension or future NDIS reforms.
  Any queries from Partners about the extension should be directed to the NDIA, to ensure confidentiality in the negotiation process.

- The disability sector may be concerned that their previous feedback (pre-NDIS Review) about the Partner program has not been addressed.
  To address these concerns, the NDIA has established an advisory group, with sector representation, to support co-design of navigation reforms. Some improvements to the program will be made in the short term via this extension of current Partner agreements.

- s47C - deliberative processes

Next steps

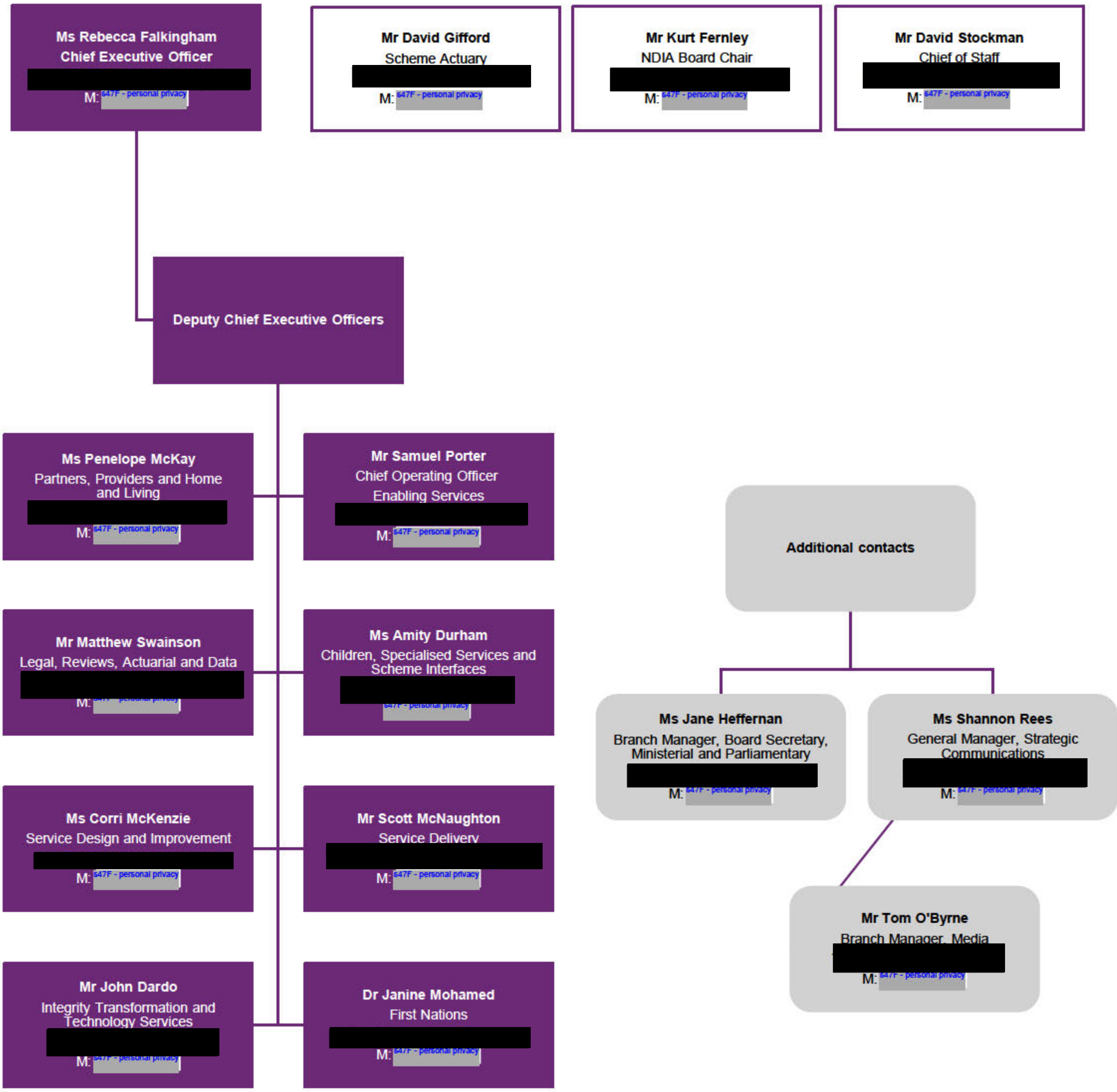
- s47C - deliberative processes

- s47C - deliberative processes

5. Agency overview

5.1. Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership Team

On 18 October 2022, the NDIA Board appointed Ms Rebecca Falkingham as NDIA Chief Executive Officer. The CEO is supported by 8 Deputy Chief Executive Officers:



5.2. Ministerial Support

You can expect a high level of service from the NDIA to assist you to perform your ministerial roles within Government.

The Board Secretary, Ministerial and Parliamentary Branch has day-to-day responsibility for managing the interface and the flow of material between the NDIA, your office and the Parliament. Jane Heffernan, Branch Manager, is available to discuss your requirements with your Chief of Staff.

The Ministerial Services Charter, which will be provided to your office separately, details the supports the Agency can provide your office, including processes for dealing with briefings, correspondence and representations from individual NDIS participants.

The Agency is also able to assist you with media releases and information to respond to media enquiries. Tom O'Byrne, Branch Manager, Media, is available to discuss your requirements with your Chief of Staff and Press Secretary.

5.3. NDIA workforce

To deliver the NDIS effectively, the NDIA's workforce capability must align with the needs of participants and their families and carers. The NDIA is committed to expanding and enhancing its focus on disability and cohort awareness, while prioritising the improvement of frontline capability and overall participant experience.

The total NDIA workforce is 17,534 people, comprising:

- 9,129 APS employees (8,857 full-time equivalent (FTE) and 8,241 Average Staffing Level (ASL)).
- 2,142 contractors, including 1,851 labour hire staff, 218 consultants and 73 contractors with system access only.
- 6,263 outsourced workers, including 4,669 Partners in the Community staff, 1,584 National Contact Centre staff and 10 other outsourced staff.

The number of APS employees who live with a disability increased to 22% in 2024, which is above the target of 19%. The number of Senior Executive Service APS employees living with disability is 22% which is also above its target of 12%.

In 2023–24, 1,210 new APS employees joined with more than half in front-line participant-facing roles.

Remote Community Connector Program

The Remote Community Connector Program is being expanded in 2025, so participants have access to local experts on the Scheme, where there is no Partner in the Community. Expansion will increase coverage to all First Nations communities in remote and very remote areas and will cover 8,800 participants.

Aboriginal Disability Liaison Officer program

The Aboriginal Disability Liaison Officer program offers an important function to First Nations people with disability in areas where there is a Partner in the Community. The Aboriginal Disability Liaison Officer program will continue and will be a critical part of the Agency's delivery of the navigator function.

NDIS First Nations Strategy

The NDIA is improving outcomes for First Nations people with disability in line with recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, Independent Review of the NDIS and the commitment under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. First Nations people with disability account for around 8% of total NDIS participants.

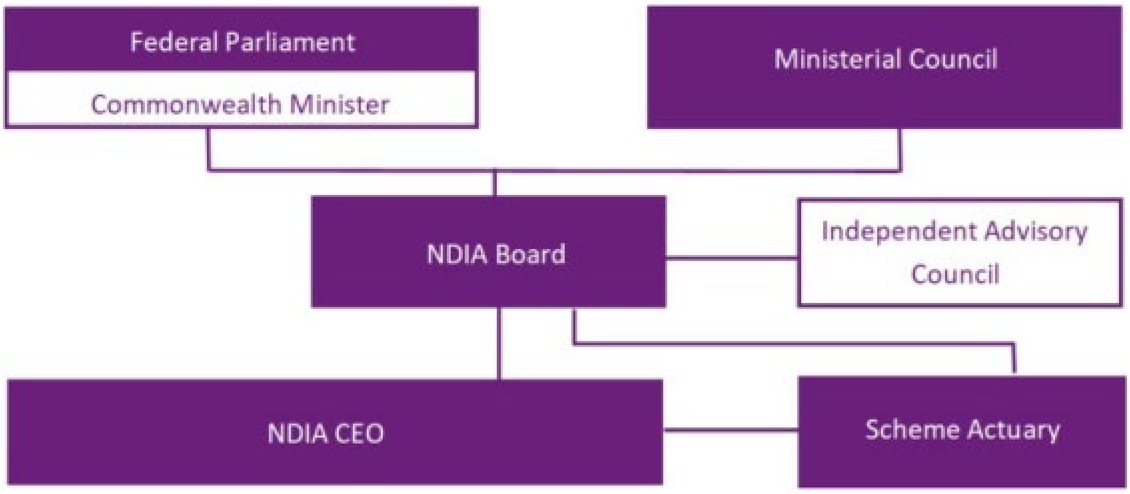
In January 2025, NDIS First Nations Strategy 2025–2030 was released with key priority areas. The Strategy will support the First Nations Group to deliver cultural safety initiatives, policy reforms, Market and Sector Development, Indigenous data sovereignty and a First Nations workforce strategy.

In February 2025, the NDIA established a new Independent Advisory Council (IAC) First Nations Reference Group (FNRG) to elevate First Nations voices in decision making. The IAC FNRG comprises of only First Nations people with disability and provides the IAC and NDIA Board with advice on matters affecting First Nations people.

Early Ministerial support and advocacy for the implementation of the Strategy and new First Nations governance architecture will help to promote a strengths-based approach to improving meaningful outcomes, mitigate against public criticism, and provide the imprimatur to embark upon the transformational change required to close the gap.

5.4. NDIS governance

The NDIA is a Corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) with statutory authority under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act). The governance model is set out in the NDIS Act) and illustrated in the following diagram.



5.5. Board of the National Disability Insurance Agency

The NDIA Board is the governing body and Accountable Authority and its role and functions are established by the NDIS Act. The Board's primary functions are to ensure the proper, efficient and effective performance of the NDIA and to determine the Agency's objectives, strategies and policies.

The NDIS Act establishes certain requirements that underpin the relationships between the NDIA Board and the Minister for the NDIS. In particular, the Minister for the NDIS may give the NDIA Board a statement setting out strategic guidance for the Agency, noting consultation must first occur with each host jurisdiction to seek their agreement to the giving of the statement.

The NDIA Board is also responsible for reporting its performance to the Disability Reform Ministerial Council (DRMC) as set out in the NDIS Act, the PGPA Act and intergovernmental agreements with states and territories.

Meetings are held in different locations throughout the country and the Board takes the opportunity to meet with local advocacy organisations, providers of support, NDIS participants and their families.

The Board has regard to the experience of participants, primarily through the advice of the Independent Advisory Council (IAC), which is established by the NDIS Act and led by the IAC principal member, who is also a Board member.

Board members attend IAC meetings on a rotational basis and the Board Chair attends DRMC meetings.

The terms of 4 Board members are due to expire in 2025, including the Chair and there is one vacancy. Your department manages the appointment process of Board members in consultation with the Minister and state and territory disability ministers. Current members of the NDIA Board (external) are:

- Mr Kurt Fearnley AO (Chair)
- Mr Mark Darras
- Ms Maryanne Diamond AO
- Dr Richard Fejo
- Dr Rhonda Galbally AC
- Dr Graeme Innes AM
- Mrs Joan McKenna Kerr
- Dr Denis Napthine AO
- Ms Estelle Pearson
- Ms Leah van Poppel
- Dr Ian Watt

Ministerial Council – Disability Reform Ministerial Council

The Disability Reform Ministers Council (DRMC) is the ‘Ministerial Council’ for the purposes of the NDIS Act. It is a forum for Commonwealth and state and territory ministers responsible for disability policy to drive national reform and is Chaired by the Commonwealth. Your department provides secretariat support.

DRMC receives reports and advice from the Board as required by the NDIS Act, considers policy matters that relate to the NDIS, and advises the Minister. The Minister also consults DRMC about policy matters relating to the NDIS or that arise under the NDIS Act. DRMC also drives national reform in disability policy and implementation, including the NDIS and Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021–2031 (external).

Independent Advisory Council

The Independent Advisory Council (IAC) was established under the NDIS Act to bring the views of people with disability, carers and sector experts to the heart of the NDIS, providing independent advice to the Board on the way the NDIA is delivering the NDIS.

The IAC has 5 reference groups to support its work and advice:

- Children, Young People and Families Reference Group.
- Equity and Inclusion Reference Group.
- Home and Living Reference Group.
- Intellectual Disability Reference Group.
- First Nations Reference Group.

IAC member profiles are available on the IAC website (external)

Government policy relating to people with disability

Your department holds overarching responsibility for administration of Government policies, programs and services relating to people with disability. The NDIA works very closely with the department across a range of matters, especially in relation to its responsibility for strategic policy, including stewardship of the NDIS provider market and administration of the NDIS Act.

5.6. Accountability mechanisms

Australian National Audit Office

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) has 2 open performance audits (external) for the NDIA, examining the effectiveness of the Board and management of NDIS payment claims compliance.

The ANAO's final report on the effectiveness of the Board's governance is due in early 2025 and its audit on of payment claims compliance is due in mid-2025.

The Agency tracks management actions taken to address ANAO recommendations and regularly report to the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee on their status.

Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS

The Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS is tasked with inquiring into the implementation, performance, governance, and administration and expenditure of the NDIS, as well as other matters relating to the NDIS if referred to it by either house of the Australian Parliament.

Further information about the committee and its previous inquiries can be found on the Parliament of Australia website (external)

PGPA Act and Commonwealth Procurement Rules

The *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs) provide clear direction regarding the responsibility and accountability of all officials involved in procurement processes. The PGPA Act establishes the separation of roles by outlining the duties of accountable authorities (in the NDIA's case, the NDIA Board) to manage public resources appropriately. Officials, rather than Ministers, are responsible for making procurement decisions.

Under the CPRs, except where required by law, Ministers must not be involved in the conduct of procurement processes or direct officials on the conduct of procurement processes. The CPRs do allow the NDIA to keep the Minister informed about the conduct of procurement processes.

While the NDIA is not bound by the CPRs, the NDIA Board has committed to following the CPRs, with a small number of exceptions relating to the use of AusTender requirements and reporting.

5.7. NDIS context and governing frameworks

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is an international human rights convention that sets out the fundamental human rights of people with disability, and is made up of 2 documents:

- The UNCRPD contains the main human rights provisions expressed as a series of articles; it came into force in Australia in 2008.
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a more limited document that sets up an individual complaints procedure; it came into force in Australia in 2009.

The UNCRPD contains traditional human rights concepts that are general protections found in other thematic human rights conventions. For example, it outlaws discrimination in all areas of life, including employment, education, health services, transportation and access to justice.

For further information please refer to United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) | Australian Human Rights Commission (external)

Australia's Disability Strategy

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 (external) was launched on 3 December 2021 and is Australia's national disability policy framework, setting out a plan for continuing to improve the lives of people with disability over the next 10 years. A 2024 review of the strategy is published on the Department of Social Services website at Australia's Disability Strategy 2024 Review | Disability Gateway (external).

An independent evaluation of the strategy will start in 2025.

Productivity Commission report on disability care and support

In 2011, after examining a range of options and approaches, including international examples of the provision of long-term care and support for people with severe or profound disability, the Productivity Commission recommended the establishment of a new national scheme that provides insurance cover for all Australians in the event of significant disability.

In response to this report, the NDIS was established with bipartisan support. For further information and the Productivity Commission's report please refer to Inquiry report - Disability Care and Support - Productivity Commission (external)

The NDIS Act

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act) (external), in conjunction with other laws, gives effect to Australia's obligations under the UNCRPD and sets out the general principles, requirements and operation of the NDIS.

The NDIS Act also establishes the NDIA as the independent statutory agency responsible for the administration of the NDIS, with a Board to ensure the proper, efficient and effective performance of the Agency's functions.

The core functions of the NDIA are set out in the NDIS Act and include:

- delivering the NDIS in a way that supports the independence and social and economic participation of people with disability
- enabling people with disability to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports
- promoting the provision of high quality and innovative supports enabling people with disability to maximise independent lifestyles and inclusion in the community.

There are specific functions relating to managing, advising and reporting on the financial sustainability of the NDIS.

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No.1) Act 2024* passed Parliament in August 2024.

NDIS Rules

The NDIS Rules are legislative instruments made under the NDIS Act that set out the more detailed operation of the NDIS. The Rules accompany and should be read in conjunction with the NDIS Act.

NDIS Rules include:

- Becoming a Participant
- Supports for Participants, Children, Nominees
- Plan Management
- Registered Providers of Supports
- Protection and Disclosure of Information
- Intergovernmental agreements.

NDIS Rules are available at Federal Register of Legislation - National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (external)

Operational guidelines explain how the NDIS Act, the NDIS Rules and operational policy are implemented. They are available at Operational Guidelines | NDIS (external)

Intergovernmental Agreements

The NDIS is a national scheme, with funding and governance involving federal, state and territory governments in accordance with the NDIS Act. Bilateral agreements have been established between the Commonwealth and each of the state and territory governments, which set out the agreed funding arrangements.

The operation of these agreements and NDIS costs and funding are reviewed every 5 years, with the next review due by December 2028.

Responsibilities of the NDIS and other service systems

Principles to determine the interactions of the NDIS with other service systems were agreed by governments in 2015, noting they reinforce the obligations of other service delivery systems to improve the lives of people with disability.

Governments agreed to the Applied Principles and Tables of Support (APTOS) (external), which set out the responsibilities of the federal, state and territory governments to provide a range of supports to people with disabilities through the NDIS and mainstream systems.

APTOS principles had previously been enshrined in the Supports for Participants Rules and are now broadly reflected in the NDIS Supports list under Section 10 of the NDIS Act. Note over the coming 12 months the NDIS Supports list and associated Rule may be subject to further refinement and will require collaboration and agreement with states and territories.

5.8. NDIA publications

Name and Description	Key date/s
Annual Report The Annual Report (external) provides a detailed description of the NDIA's operations during the year and is required by the PGPA Act and the NDIS Act.	Generally published in October of each year.
Corporate Plan The Corporate Plan (external) describes the NDIA's strategic direction for the next 4 years and required by the PGPA Act and the NDIS Act.	Generally prepared for each financial year.
Annual Financial Sustainability Report The Annual Financial Sustainability Report (AFSR) (external) provides an assessment of the financial sustainability of the NDIS and is prepared by the Scheme Actuary for the NDIA Board in accordance with the NDIS Act.	Generally published in December each year subject to decision by the NDIA Board.
Summary of statistics The summary of statistics (external) provides a summary of statistics for the previous month in comparison with the same month of the previous year and is prepared in accordance with the NDIS Act.	Must be published within 15 days of the end of each calendar month.
Quarterly report to disability ministers The Quarterly report to disability ministers (external) provide information (including statistics) about participants in each jurisdiction and the funding or provision of supports by the NDIA in each jurisdiction and is prepared in accordance with the NDIS Act.	Must be provided to disability ministers within 42 days of the end of each quarter. Must be published within 45 days of the end of each quarter.
Participant Service Charter The Participant Service Charter (external) sets out what can be expected from the NDIA and Partner in the Community organisations. It provides overall principles for interactions and clear service standards and timeframes.	Each quarter, the NDIA reports against PSG timeframes in the Quarterly Report (external).

Name and Description	Key date/s
These are included in the legislated Participant Service Guarantee (PSG). The Charter is also underpinned by the specific tangible actions listed in the Participant Service Improvement Plan 2022–23. The PSG, charter and improvement plan provide a clear direction to improve the participant experience with the NDIS.	
Data releases The NDIA publishes 'open data releases' on the NDIS website for public access on a quarterly, bi-annual or annual basis. Data is also available to view in interactive visualisation tools on the NDIS website at Explore data (external) Reports, including analysis of the outcomes of participants and their families and carers, and specific deep-dives on participant cohorts are also published on the NDIS website at Reports and analyses (external). Detailed tailored data on a range of topics, including participant demographics, access, plans, committed supports paid and outcomes, can be provided to academics, research organisations, and Government departments and agencies.	Published on a quarterly, bi-annual or annual basis.

5.9. Sector relations

You will be approached by many peak bodies and provider organisations wanting to meet with you. The NDIA can provide advice about particular organisations.

Key disability peak bodies contacts

Name	Contact
Disability Advocacy Network Australia (external)	s47F - personal privacy
National Disability Services (external)	
Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (external)	
Children and Young People with Disability Australia (external)	
People with Disability Australia (external)	
Inclusion Australia (external)	

Name	Contact
Australian Autism Alliance (external)	s47F - personal privacy
Women with Disabilities Australia (external)	
Every Australian Counts (external)	

Disability Representative and Carer Organisations Forum

The NDIA works closely with 27 Disability representative and carer organisations (external) (DRCOs) on reforms, changes and improvements to the NDIS.

These organisations were selected for their:

- significant involvement in the formation of the NDIS and National Disability Strategy and contribution to the UNCRPD United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- extensive knowledge on specific policies that affect people with a disability and expertise in accessible consultation and person-centred engagement
- established connections to large networks of people with a disability across Australia.

The DRCO Forum meets quarterly to discuss improvements to the NDIS and the experiences of participants across Australia, and members take part in co-design with the NDIA, NDIS participants and members of the IAC.

The DRCO Forum has a shared operating model. The NDIA funds Disability Advocacy Network Australia to provide a shared secretariat function in partnership with the NDIA, ensuring joint leadership and equal opportunity to drive the focus of the forum.

The NDIA also has bespoke contracts with several national disability organisations to address intersectionality in co-design activities and to connect with less heard voices from the disability community.

Co-design Advisory Group

The Co-design Advisory Group provides strategic advice on the implementation of co-design and engagement processes in the disability community.

Co-design Advisory Group members work together to ensure disability community perspectives on issues facing the NDIS are represented; gather feedback on the co-design priorities and approaches with peers and members; and provide and receive strategic advice on the design, implementation and evaluation of co-design and engagement.

Co-design Advisory Group members include representatives from the disability sector, the IAC, and Government.

Further information on the Co-design Advisory Group, including the meeting communique, is available at Co-design Advisory Group | NDIS (external).

Participant Reference Groups

The Participant Reference Group (PRG) consists of 23 participant and carer representatives across Australia. Together, they represent the disability experiences of NDIS participants. The PRG provides valuable insights and perspectives; lived participant experience; advice to help develop, test and improve ideas; and guidance on policy and service delivery challenges.

Further information on the PRG, including membership and the meeting communique is available at Participant Reference Group | NDIS (external).

National reference and advisory groups

The NDIA works closely with several sector reference groups to develop strong working partnerships. These groups provide advice to inform decision-making about specific topics, as detailed below.

- The Autism Advisory Group (external) was established in 2018 to provide a strong voice on behalf of people with autism who are participating in the NDIS.
- The NDIA established the Children's Expert Advisory Group (external) in 2024 to focus on the experiences of children aged 0–14 years in the NDIS.
- Dispute Resolution Forum consults with participants, legal aid organisations, governments and the disability sector on how to better engage with participants who appeal an NDIA decision to the Administrative Review Tribunal.
- The IAC (external) represents the participant's voice in the NDIS. Under the NDIS Act, the IAC has a statutory function to advise the NDIA Board on the most important issues affecting participants and their carers and families. Their advice aims to improve the NDIS, the participant experience and outcomes.
- The Industry Chief Executive Forum (external), formerly the Industry Reference Group, is to advise on improvements to the NDIS, which support development of a competitive market with innovative supports and services, and empower participants to pursue their goals in inclusive communities and workplaces.
- The Mental Health Sector Reference Group (external) was established to develop a strong working partnership between the mental health sector and the NDIA.
- The Neurodegenerative, Palliative Care and Rare Diseases Advisory Group (external) supports the NDIA to deliver improved experiences for people with neurodegenerative and neuromuscular disorders, rare conditions and those requiring palliative care. The first meeting was held in May 2024.
- The Pricing Arrangement Reference Group (external) was established in response to the Independent Pricing Review commissioned by the NDIA Board to address pricing issues raised by participants and providers. The group first met in October 2018 and provides advice, through the CEO, to the NDIA Board on price control arrangements for the NDIS.
- The Self-Management Advisory Group (external) provides strategic advice to the NDIA about the needs of people who self-manage their NDIS plans. The group helps shape co-design and engagement with the disability community about changes that impact self-management.

5.1. NDIS eligibility and funded supports

NDIS eligibility

To become an NDIS participant and get supports through an NDIS plan, a person must meet the requirements set out in the NDIS Act, specifically the age, residency and disability or early intervention requirements.

A person must be younger than 65 on the day they apply for the NDIS. This means the application needs to be completed in the correct format and received by the NDIA before they turn 65. A person must also be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or Protected Special Category Visa holder and live in Australia.

If a person has a disability caused by a permanent impairment and usually needs disability-specific supports to complete daily life activities, they may be eligible for supports through an NDIS plan.

Under the NDIS Act, access to the NDIS is not based on type of disability or the presence of underlying conditions, illness or injury. Access is determined by the permanency of a person's impairment and a substantial reduction in their functional capacity to engage in the activities of daily living.

To meet the disability requirements a person must demonstrate:

- they have a disability caused by an impairment
- their impairment is likely to be permanent
- their impairment means they have a substantially reduced functional capacity to do one or more daily life activities, including moving around, communicating, socialising, learning, undertaking self-care, or self-management tasks
- the impairment affects their ability to work, study or take part in social life
- they will likely need NDIS supports for their whole life.

Early intervention – Children younger than 9

Children younger than 9 with developmental delay or disability should be referred to an NDIS early childhood partner. Under the early childhood approach an early childhood partner provides timely support to ensure that the child and family can access the right level of supports they need.

This support may include:

- linking them to activities in their local community and mainstream supports
- gathering information to better understand the child's development and needs
- developing goals with the family for their child
- delivering short-term early intervention, for children with developmental concerns
- supporting the access request if the child is likely to meet the access requirements.

People older than 65

People aged 65 years and over who are looking for disability services and support for the first time should be referred to My Aged Care for Government-funded aged care services.

Who is not eligible for the NDIS

The NDIS will not provide funding or supports for time-limited (non-ongoing) conditions. For example, reduced mobility due to an acute injury, such as a lower limb fracture, will not meet the NDIS disability requirement, as the condition is likely to resolve.

The NDIS will also not provide funding or supports for chronic health conditions that are not related to a person's disability. For example, the NDIS may fund disability supports for a person who has had a lower limb amputation due to peripheral artery disease because of diabetes (physical impairment resulting in disability secondary to a health condition), as long as they meet all of the access requirements. However, the NDIS will not fund medication or medical care relating to the treatment of diabetes or peripheral artery disease.

There are several supports and services provided by governments and the community sector for people with disability across Australia, and the NDIA may identify a person's supports are best delivered by these other service systems. The NDIA's local area coordinators (LACs) and early childhood partners may also help link people with disability to these services.

Supports the NDIS will provide

The NDIS funds a range of supports and services that may include education, employment, social participation, independence, living arrangements, and health and wellbeing.

To be considered reasonable and necessary, a support or service:

- must be related to a participant's disability
- must not include day-to-day living costs unrelated to disability support needs, such as groceries
- should represent value for money
- must be likely to be effective and work for the participant
- should take into account support provided by other government services, family, carers, networks and the community.

Each support category in an NDIS plan includes a definition of the types of supports a participant can use this funding for. The NDIA also groups these support categories in one of 4 support budgets:

- **Core supports**: NDIS supports to help with everyday activities, like help to take part in activities in the community.
- **Capacity building supports**: NDIS supports to help build skills. This may increase independence and reduce the need for the same level of support in the future. Progress and outcomes from these supports will be shared at each plan reassessment.
- **Capital supports**: NDIS supports including high-cost assistive technology, equipment, vehicle modifications, home modifications and specialist disability accommodation.
- **Recurring supports**: NDIS supports paid by the NDIA on a regular basis. This funding is not included anywhere else in a participant's budget.

Supports the NDIS will not provide

Under the NDIS Act, the NDIA cannot fund services, items and equipment that are not NDIS supports. NDIS participants also cannot spend their funding on things that are not NDIS supports.

In some specific circumstances, the NDIA can fund supports that are not NDIS supports. These are called replacement supports. They include a service, item or equipment a participant would like to use instead of the NDIS support or supports in their plan. Only some supports can be replaced, and only if the NDIA agrees in writing this support can be purchased.

There are 15 categories of goods and services that are not NDIS supports which are either considered to be day-to-day living costs or not evidence-based supports. These are services, items and equipment that can't be funded by the NDIS.

Under the NDIS Act, the NDIA also cannot fund sexual services and sex work, alcohol or drugs.

A full list of the 15 categories of goods and services that are not NDIS supports and a full list of replacement supports are available at What does NDIS fund? | NDIS (external).

Access pathway to the NDIS

Partner in the Community (Partners) organisations support people with disability and over 70% of NDIS participants to connect with, understand and navigate the NDIS, as well as connect to local community and mainstream supports. They also support people with disability to apply for the NDIS.

Early childhood (EC) Partners support families of children aged 0 to 8 years to connect to supports that best meet their child's needs. This includes connecting families to community and other government services or helping to apply to the NDIS. Additionally, EC Partners provide early supports for children younger than 6 with developmental concerns.

Local Area Coordinator (LAC) Partners support people 9 years and over to understand and access the NDIS, implement their NDIS plan and build capacity within the community. LACs support the inclusion of all people with disability by developing community connections.

5.2. Facts and Figures – Quarterly Report

The tables below provide key facts and figures on NDIS participant profiles and payment distributions (as at 31 March 2025) and budget estimates for reasonable and necessary supports.

Receiving supports for the first time

NDIS Participants	Participant numbers	% of participants	Total Payments ($m)	% of payments	Median payments[1]
NDIS Participants	717,001	100%	$44,956	100%	$19,900
Receiving supports for the first time[2]	502,035	70%	$18,868	42%	$14,900

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred dollars.

[2] Those that did not transfer from existing Commonwealth, state and territory disability supports prior to joining the NDIS.

Participants by plan management type

Plan management type	Participant numbers	% of participants	Total Payments ($m)	% of payments	Median payments[3]
Agency managed	50,572	7%	$4,657	10%	$20,400
Self-managed (Fully)	158,740	22%	$3,364	7%	$10,600
Self-managed (Partly)	36,768	5%	$2,724	6%	$21,800
Plan managed	467,935	65%	$34,087	76%	$24,700
Plan type not recorded	2,986	0%	$124	0%	$700

[3] Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred dollars.

By Cohort

Cohort	Participant numbers	% of participants	Total Payments ($m)	% of payments	Median payments[4]
First Nations	58,140	8%	$3,487	8%	$19,600
CALD	63,007	9%	$4,574	10%	$30,100
Regional (include Rural)	214,322	30%	$12,416	28%	$17,600
Remote & Very Remote	10,989	2%	$737	2%	$20,900
Regional, Remote & Very Remote (include Rural)	225,311	31%	$13,153	29%	$17,900

[4] Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred dollars.

By Age

Age [5]	Participant numbers	% of participants	Total Payments ($m)	% of payments	Median payments[6]
Children under 15	307,286	43%	$6,040	13%	$11,500
Children 0-8	167,876	23%	$3,043	7%	$11,200
Children 9-14	139,410	19%	$2,997	7%	$9,700
15-18	70,279	10%	$2,327	5%	$10,000
19-64	301,834	42%	$31,956	71%	$47,100
65+	37,599	5%	$4,511	10%	$54,900
Missing	3	0%	$112	0%	$1,000

[5] From the December 2024 quarter onwards, the age groups used for reporting have been adjusted. The "0 to 6 year old" age group is now "0 to 8 year old". The "7 to 14 year old" age group is now "9 to 14 year old".

[6] Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred dollars.

By Primary Disability

Primary Disability	Participant numbers	% of participants	Total Payments ($m)	% of payments	Median payments[7]
Autism	274,360	38%	$9,117	20%	$13,400
Intellectual Disability[8]	94,698	13%	$10,288	23%	$48,300
Developmental Delay	88,112	12%	$1,174	3%	$9,200
Psychosocial Disability	64,865	9%	$5,637	13%	$52,600
Hearing Impairment	28,738	4%	$274	1%	$4,900
Other Neurological	24,438	3%	$3,645	8%	$63,100
Other Physical	20,099	3%	$1,457	3%	$33,300
Acquired Brain Injury	19,292	3%	$3,140	7%	$80,500
Global Developmental Delay	19,058	3%	$345	1%	$12,000

[7] Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred dollars.

[8] From September 2024, Down Syndrome is reported as a separate disability group. Previously, Down Syndrome was reported under the Intellectual Disability group.

Primary Disability	Participant numbers	% of participants	Total Payments ($m)	% of payments	Median payments[7]
Cerebral Palsy	18,196	3%	$2,958	7%	$68,700
Other[9]	12,719	2%	$1,181	3%	$27,400
Down Syndrome	11,699	2%	$1,533	3%	$75,700
Multiple Sclerosis	11,613	2%	$1,157	3%	$39,500
Visual Impairment	10,670	1%	$470	1%	$24,600
Stroke	10,249	1%	$1,515	3%	$74,100
Spinal Cord Injury	6,280	1%	$1,041	2%	$75,400
Other Sensory/Speech	1,915	0%	$23	0%	$5,700

Source: NDIS Quarterly Report to disability ministers – 31 March 2025

[9] This covers approximately 45 conditions – the top 4 are ‘Attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD)’, ‘Amputation - Single limb or upper/lower limb’, ‘Diabetes mellitus’ and ‘Childhood apraxia of speech’.

Budget estimates for reasonable and necessary supports, 2024–25 to 2028–29

Contributor ($ thousand)	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2027–28	2028–29
Commonwealth	33,561,217	36,742,521	40,045,657	43,484,321	46,971,458
States and territories	12,584,328	13,086,397	13,608,503	14,151,446	15,270,549
Other	50,905	0	0	0	0
Total	46,196,450	49,828,918	53,654,160	57,635,767	62,242,007
Commonwealth (% of total)	73%	74%	75%	75%	75%
States and territories (% of total)	27%	26%	25%	25%	25%

Note:

- Sourced from Table 2.1.1 on page 160 of the 2025-26 Portfolio Budget Statements.
- Commonwealth % includes the Other Contributions as the Commonwealth is responsible for cost overruns in the Scheme.