



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
Question on Notice

NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000463

JOINT PLANNING REVIEWS

Hearing: 19 November 2019

Hansard Page: 54

Question:

Of the 203 where the delegate approved the plan, has there been any review sought?

Answer:

Of the 223 plans approved during the soft launch of the Joint Planning Meetings, to date there have been three unscheduled Change of Circumstance (section 48) plan reviews.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
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NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000464

JOINT PLANNING REVIEWS

Hearing: 19 November 2019

Hansard Page: 56

Question:

In terms of a baseline for comparison with the soft launch, to see if it's reducing reviews, what is the rate of review across this sample size? Do you know what the normal proportion of reviews are over that time period for that number of people?

Answer:

Unscheduled plan reviews are defined as plans that are reviewed more than 100 days before the scheduled plan review date. There are two types of reviews:

1. Section 48 reviews is where a participant can ask the NDIA to review their National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIS) plan at any time. Nationwide, the frequency of unscheduled reviews is:
 - 24 per cent as at 30 September 2017
 - 16 per cent as at 30 September 2019.
2. Section 100 reviews relate to an internal review of a planning decision (ie internal independent review of the planning decision). Nationwide, the frequency of unscheduled reviews is:
 - 5.4 per cent as at 30 September 2019.

The Joint Planning Meetings soft launch in South Australia had 223 plans completed between September and November 2019. As of 21 November 2019:

- Section 48 reviews: 1.3 per cent (3 requests)
- Section 100 reviews: 0 per cent.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
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NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000465

ADVOCACY SERVICES

Hearing: 19 November 2019

Hansard Page: 58

Question:

Can you update the committee on where we are in relation to advocacy services?

Answer:

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has policy responsibility for advocacy services.

NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000466

LOCAL AREA COORDINATION

Hearing: 19 November 2019

Hansard Page: 34

Question:

CHAIR: LACs are obviously the crucial people in this scheme. I'm not diminishing the role of anybody else, but they're the ones with whom the interface between potential recipients and recipients of NDIS funding occurs. In terms of the organisations for which the LACs work, what are their KPIs?

Ms Rundle: We do have contractual arrangements with each of the LAC partners, and there are KPIs in the contract. **I will need to get you the detail, if you'd like the detail of the KPIs—**

Mr WALLACE: **They don't get paid, for instance, on how many plans they might write?**

Ms Rundle: We do have targets in the LAC contracts, but I would need to take that on notice and check that for you and get the details.

Mr WALLACE: And that that's the only time they get paid.

Ms Rundle: No. To my knowledge that is not correct.

CHAIR: Thank you. If you can provide us with that information, that would be useful.

Mr Lye: It's more like a block grant.

Ms Rundle: That's right; it's a block grant.

Mr Lye: I think it's a quarterly interval.

Ms Rundle: **They're probably paid quarterly, but I'd just need to check that. But it is exactly like that; it's like a block grant.**

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) generally enters into grant agreements or contracts with Partners in the Community (PITC) via an open, competitive selection process. In some circumstances, the NDIA may determine that an alternative selection process is warranted to more effectively achieve the objectives of the PITC Program. This may include closed selection by invitation, expression of interest to test the market, or a restricted selection where a small number of identified applicants are invited to submit an application, which is then assessed on a competitive basis.

PITC are funded via grant agreements or contracts for the delivery of Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) and/or Local Area Coordination (LAC) services. This funding is separate to the funding allocated to participants via funded supports in their National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan. These grant agreements and contracts are paid in advance on a monthly basis. Activities required to be delivered by PITC include Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC), community and mainstream engagement (CME), planning and plan support. Funding is calculated based on the mix of services using actuarial models, taking into account demographic and statistical analysis appropriate for the services areas the PITC cover.

Partners in the Community delivering LAC services are required to comply with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as set out in their Agreements with the NDIA. KPIs address key measures including:

- Timeliness of interactions with participants (initial contact and planning)
- Linkages to additional supports
- Contribution to Information, ILC / Community Capacity Building (CCB)
- Plan support and implementation
- Participant satisfaction.

KPIs differ across PITC Agreements due to progressive sourcing aligned to the roll out of the scheme across all states and territories over time. The NDIA is currently working with PITC to improve reporting outcomes and establish a revised KPI and Assurance Framework that is consistent across all PITC Agreements that drives performance, quality and improvement for people with a disability, their families and carers.



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Reference No: SQ19-000467

STAFF TRAINING

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: 41

Question:

So where is the training, and what training is actually occurring, other than training around what the processes are?
If you could, between the department and the agency, give us a full overview of what the training package is.

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has a thorough on-boarding and training program for both internal staff and those employed through our contracted Partners in the Community.

New Starter Program

The revised National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) New Starter Program (NSP) was implemented nationally from September 2018. The NSP is a six week program that blends face to face training with on-the-job, self-directed, peer support and leader led activities. The NSP has a strong focus on the NDIA values, building empathy, and behaviours and skills that help support participants.

Modules included in the NSP include:

- Disability awareness
- Customer Focus including values and service charter
- Building relationships with participants
- Managing unreasonable behaviour and de-escalation skills
- Participant pathway overview
- Engaging with the NDIS and Access Criteria
- Role of LACs and planners
- Applying Reasonable and Necessary criteria.

In addition, there is a corporate induction program and specific induction Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) workforce, the complex support needs workforce and the National Contact Centre.

Mandatory Learning

Mandatory learning modules for the internal and partner workforce includes:

- Information handling
- Security Awareness
- Australian Public Service Values and Employment Principles and the Code of Conduct
- Safety and Wellbeing Awareness

- Fraud Awareness.

In addition, Work Health and Safety Due Diligence is compulsory for the Senior Executive Service workforce.

Service Delivery Training Programs

Key aspects of the targeted service delivery training programs include:

- The national rollout of Service Improvement and Psychosocial Awareness training for the NDIA and Partner planning workforce (completed in June 2019 and now included in the New Starter Program)
- Delivery of specialist training for ECEI partners and Hearing stream planners and providers
- Development of joint planning training material to support a national deployment.

Inclusion and Diversity

The NDIA is also progressively rolling out training programs focused on disability and cultural awareness to improve the service experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, LGBTIQ+, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people.

In addition, the NDIA has collaborated with the Disability Advocacy Network of Australia (DANA) to raise disability awareness amongst staff and help improve the participant experience. Through DANA, the NDIA worked with groups such as Australian Autism Alliance, Prader-Willi Syndrome Australia and Down Syndrome Australia to build knowledge and real life stories. As a result of this project, the NDIA has produced 12 videos and snapshots on specific disabilities, and an eLearning module for staff.

Leadership

The NDIA has also launched the Just Brilliant leader series this year. The Just Brilliant leader series introduces fundamental leadership and management skills required in every NDIA leadership role, and is designed to ensure a consistent approach to leadership and management practice across levels of leadership. The Just Brilliant leader series includes three components designed for Australian Public Service level 6 to Senior Executive Service.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
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NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000468

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

What is the process for a person from a remote Northern Territory community, for argument's sake let's say its Maningrida, who makes a claim, for say sun protection for their mobility aid? In the first instance, who assists this person to make an application, given there may be English literacy barriers, challenges with digital connections etc?

Answer:

Participants and pre-participants can access language support through a) Community Connectors, who are trusted community members who speak a range of local languages, b) planners and support coordinators who can link participants into state based Indigenous Language Services, c) providers and assessors who can support participants, at no cost to participant or plan, to link with state based Indigenous Language Services.

In Northern Territory the state based Indigenous Language Services is Aboriginal Interpreting Services and is funded by Northern Territory Government.

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) planners discuss Assistive Technology (AT) requirements, including repair and maintenance, with participants/carers during planning discussions to ensure adequate funding is available to provide reasonable and necessary AT supports.

AT costing under \$1,500 can be purchased without quotes or further approvals, once it is included in a participant's NDIS plan.

From October 2019, a new option for the funding and supply of nominated AT supports between \$1,500 to \$5,000 was introduced.

Some assistive technology supports are relatively standard. With appropriate advice by an AT assessor, participants can now purchase items up to \$5,000 within nine categories using their plan funding, without the need for agency review.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
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NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000469

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

Once that application is in, what is the process for assessment? Would NDIA staff go out to assess in person? How long would this take? Do they have access to interpreters?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) engages appropriately qualified Assistive Technology (AT) assessors to undertake an AT assessment for a participant. An AT assessor will assess the participant's needs and situation, and identify the most appropriate piece of AT. They may be an allied health practitioner, rehabilitation engineer, AT mentor or other suitably qualified practitioners. The AT assessor will then make a recommendation to the NDIA as to which piece of AT is the most appropriate for that participant's individual functional abilities and circumstances.

Timeframes for assessment vary depending upon the information provided in the AT application, the complexity of the AT requested, and whether the NDIA needs to seek further advice from participants or AT Assessors.

Where a translator or interpreter is required to communicate with participants, the NDIA has partnered with Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) National to provide language interpreting services for participants with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Participants from CALD backgrounds will not be charged for language interpreting services when they are using the services/supports of NDIS registered providers under this new arrangement.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
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NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000470

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

Under what circumstances would an application go to headquarters in Geelong for assessment?

Answer:

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) planners and access assessors are located throughout Australia. Applications are not sent to the National Office in Geelong, they are managed within the NDIA's service delivery network.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
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NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000471

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

And how much would all this assessment cost the NDIA?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency does not currently have structured data on the cost of assessments.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
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NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000472

APPEALS

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

How are people in remote communities assisted through the appeals process?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) delivers the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to participants living in remote communities through teams of specialist staff who undertake regular planned visits to remote communities, and who engage with and provide assistance and support to participants within those communities.

These teams can assist with an appeal through the application for a review process.

In regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote communities, refer to SQ19-000475.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
Question on Notice

NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000473

APPEALS

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

Are appeals dealt with at a local level or do they have to go through to South Australia or Geelong?

Answer:

Application for reviews of decisions are assigned to National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) review officers. Review officers are located throughout the NDIA regional network.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
Question on Notice

NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000474

NDIS BUSINESS MODEL

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

Is the NDIS business model the same Australia wide? (if so, how does a one size fits all model work?)

Answer:

Yes, however the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) recognises that a one size fits all model is not appropriate for all participants.

As part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) pathway reforms the NDIA has designed ways to better support people with a disability, their families and carers, and provide a more consistent NDIS experience for all participants, called tailored approaches.

The tailored approaches have been designed to provide the appropriate level of support and a consistent NDIS experience for all participants. Broadly, the tailored approaches are categorised as:

- Pathways: describes the end-to-end participant experience of a participant when interacting with the NDIS
- Service streams: provision of customised support for people with disability to provide an experience that better responds to specific disability requirements
- Service enhancements: complementary customer service approaches that focus on culturally-appropriate and locally-tailored communication and engagement needs.

The NDIA has ensured that the new approaches are flexible and appropriate for all participants regardless of their background, location, or complexity. The NDIA aims to achieve equitable access to the NDIS for all people with a disability who meet eligibility requirements.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
Question on Notice

NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000475

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTICIPANTS

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

In the Northern Territory, 52% of NDIS participants identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. How does the NDIS reflect their particular needs?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) provides supports to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants based on their individual needs. Participant choice and control has always been, and will remain, central to the delivery of the NDIS. NDIS participants choose how best to use their NDIS funding on the supports and services that will support them to meet their needs and goals.

The NDIA is continuing to enhance the participant pathway to ensure the NDIS is accessible and effective for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

Participant pathway enhancements are focussing on:

- Improved engagement;
- Working with trusted sources of support to facilitate access to the NDIS;
- Simplified planning processes and resources (including in different languages);
- Culturally competent service provision; and
- Communication and information about the NDIS that is locally tailored, culturally responsive and community appropriate.

The NDIA currently has 74 (FTE) Indigenous community connectors who cover 234 communities across Queensland, South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia.

The government committed \$20 million to extend the NDIA's Community Connectors Program to support and assist hard to reach communities to navigate the NDIS. It is anticipated this will increase to 121 Community Connectors covering 344 remote communities. Additionally, specific urban and rural Local Government Areas will be targeted for the expansion based on need, with 45 Community Connectors servicing communities across all states and territories.

The NDIA is working closely with a range of stakeholders, such as Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, to develop approaches to service delivery models that are culturally appropriate and utilise local capacity and capability.

While there may be similarities in the cultures and languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is also essential to recognise that participants, families, communities and informal supports also have their own unique needs. The NDIA is working to ensure that communication and information about the NDIS is locally tailored, culturally responsive and

community appropriate. The NDIA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy was release in March 2017 and is currently under review.

In regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander translators or interpreters, this was answered in SQ19-000468.



Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
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NDIS Planning

Reference No: SQ19-000476

REMOTE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Hearing: 21 November 2019

Hansard Page: Written

Question:

Often there is very little access to specialist service providers in NT communities. What is the flexibility in NDIS packages to reflect this? Can family be recognised as care providers in some circumstance?

Answer:

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) delivers the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to participants living in remote communities through teams of specialist staff who undertake regular planned visits to remote communities, and who engage with and provide assistance and support to participants within those communities.

Further support for people with a disability and their families in remote locations comes through the Community Connector model which provides community-based and trusted resources who actively connect local people with disability and their families with the NDIS and providers.

The NDIS pricing guide provides higher prices for some supports in remote and very remote as a response to increased costs in those areas. Remote and Very Remote loadings have been increased from 20 per cent and 25 per cent to 40 per cent and 50 per cent respectively.

Service partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Aboriginal Medical Services to support participants through the pathway (Access and Planning) and deliver ECEI approaches across remote Australia are being explored. The NDIA is currently piloting the approach with 10 ACCO/AMS organisation across Western Australia and Northern Territory.

Where specific supports are not available, NDIS support coordinators and planners may consider:

- Encouraging providers from adjacent sectors (for example health, local government and aged care) already working in the area to register to provide NDIS supports;
- Supporting the participant to investigate plan-managed or self-managed options and, if appropriate, request a plan review to have the management type changed (in the knowledge that this is a delegate decision); and
- When a participant is self-managing or using a plan management provider, and in exceptional circumstances, the participant's plan can be utilised to facilitate family members to provide supports.

The NDIA is also working closely with State and Territory governments to consider more innovative options to market commissioning in thin markets. A number of locations across the country will be identified and used to design and trial new place-based commissioning

approaches. These will be jointly developed between the NDIA, State / Territory governments and local communities.