



Syndromes Without A Name (SWAN) Australia

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Committee Secretariat
Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

13 September 2018

NDIS – ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Dear Committee Secretariat,

Syndromes Without A Name (SWAN) Australia is a not for profit charity which provides information and support to families caring for a child with an undiagnosed or rare genetic condition. Many of our families have children with multiple disabilities and we have provided and will continue to provide guidance and support to our members around the NDIS.

We welcome the Joint Standing Committee Inquiry into, and report on, provision of assistive technology under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We have addressed our main areas of concern which comes from our members experiences of requesting assistive technology in their SWAN child's NDIS plans. We have chosen in this submission to focus on the role of the NDIA in approving equipment requests.

Role of the NDIA in approving equipment requests.

Inconsistency and transparency of funded assistive technology supports

There is a lot of inconsistencies about what assistive technology supports are funded under the NDIS. For examples, some SWAN members have had iPads funded in their plan not even as a communication device and others have not. Some families have had GPS's funded, others haven't.

Recommendation: A clear list that both planners and participants can refer to as to what is funded under the NDIS and what isn't. Full transparency needs to be disclosed and clear guidelines for everyone.

More funding for training of assistive technology communication devices

There is not enough money allocated in plans to train support workers on how to use communication devices, so they can communicate with clients

Recommendation: Fund communication as opposed to speech therapy particularly where adults are concerned. Funding for training communication partners should be able to be topped up prior to a plan expiring if a support worker who also acts as a communication partner, no longer works with the NDIS participant.

Funding the gap with regards to vehicle modifications

Our SWAN members who require vehicle modifications in the way of converting a vehicle to be wheelchair accessible, struggle to find suitable vehicles to convert that meet their financial budget. If it was not for their child's disability they may not be limited to the type of the vehicle they need to buy. In general, the requirement is for a vehicle not to be less than 3 years or have completed less than 45,000kms. Finding a suitable second-hand vehicle in their budget restraints can be difficult.

Recommendation: NDIS to fund the difference between a base model car and a car that can be converted to accommodate wheelchairs, as well as to continue to fund accessible car conversions.

We welcome the opportunity to provide further feedback on our submission and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Kind regards

Heather Renton
President
Syndromes Without A Name (SWAN) Australia