



Inclusion Australia Statement December 2020

NDIS Independent Assessments

Inclusion Australia is very concerned about the planned changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We are especially worried about how these new assessments and processes will work for people with intellectual disability. We have decided to speak out publicly so that people know what we think about this important topic.

There will be three big changes to the NDIS in 2021:

- People with disability will have to do a compulsory assessment to get into the NDIS
- Existing NDIS participants will gradually be forced to take the same compulsory assessments before they receive their next NDIS plan and funds
- These assessments will be used to create a set budget based on an assessment score

The NDIS says that these changes will solve four big problems:

1. Some people with disability have not been able to get into the NDIS because they do not have enough evidence of disability – but they cannot access the expensive assessments they need to prove their disability
2. There are often big differences in the plans and funding people with similar support needs receive – which is not fair
3. Participants need more flexibility in how they use their funding - rather than spending time and money proving their needs to the NDIS every year
4. The NDIS has started to cost more than the government thought it would - so there is pressure to keep costs down

Inclusion Australia agrees that we need to find solutions to these problems. We also agree that participants should have access to free assessments when they want or need them – but only on three conditions:

- A. The NDIS must demonstrate that the new assessments solve the big problems **before** they make the changes
- B. The NDIS must show that ALL people with disability – including people with intellectual disability - will still get the supports they need as they were promised when the NDIS started
- C. All NDIS plans must be based on the goals and needs of each person – and many will need to include people who know them best before funding decisions are made

The NDIS decided to use this assessment process based on one small pilot. The pilot used tools that were not designed to decide how much funding for support a person needs. This pilot also only included about 138 people with intellectual disability. Inclusion Australia thinks this is a very risky basis to disrupt the lives of almost 90,000 people with intellectual disability.

Inclusion Australia is ready to work with the NDIS to get this right, but we are asking the NDIS to do a strong test of whether the assessments solve the problems **before** making the changes. We need evidence to be confident that people with intellectual disability:

- Can get the assessments they need to get into the NDIS more easily
- Get a plan that is fair and a good fit for their unique support needs
- Get the supports they need for their individual circumstances

Inclusion Australia will talk about these issues in more detail in 2021. In the meantime, we wish everyone peace and joy over the festive season after a very challenging year.

