



# NDIS Review Background Paper

## Complex Support Needs and Restrictive Practices



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## About this paper



This Paper is about **complex support needs** and **restrictive practices** in the NDIS.



**Complex support needs** is when some people need extra help to do everyday things.



**Restrictive practices** control or stop someone's movement. They can be used to stop someone from hurting themselves, other people or things.

For example



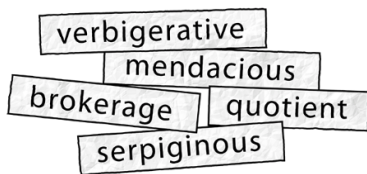
- Giving someone tablets or medicine to stop them hurting themselves



- Locking doors to stop someone running out onto the road.



**Inclusion  
Australia**



This paper was written by Inclusion Australia.

Where it says 'we' it means Inclusion Australia.

This paper is written in Easy Read.

Hard words are in **bold**.

We have written what they mean.

It is a good idea to read this Paper with support.

You can read the big version of this paper [here](#).

## About the NDIS Review

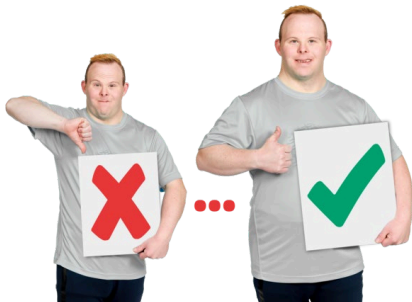


This Paper was written as part of the **NDIS Review** or the Review for short.



The Review is looking at

- What works well in the NDIS
- What could be better in the NDIS
- What needs to change in the NDIS
- How to make the NDIS last a long time.



The Review asked us to speak to people with intellectual disability and their families about their experiences with the NDIS.

## The meaning of complex needs



Participants and families are confused about what **complex needs** means in the NDIS.



To most people **complex needs** means having more than 1 disability or difficulty that you need help with.

For example someone who is Autistic and has an intellectual disability and behaviours of concern.



But the NDIS **complex needs pathway** is for people who have more than 1 system in their life.



For example

- The health system
- The housing system
- The criminal justice system.







The **complex needs pathway** is a special part of the NDIS with extra supports for people who need them.



People with complex needs may not get the supports they need because the pathway can be very confusing.



When participants do not get the supports they need their families and carers can also have a very hard time.



We think the NDIA needs to be clear about

- what **complex needs** means
- what NDIS supports can help people with complex needs.

## Choice and control



The NDIS is meant to be about **choice and control** for participants.



**Choice and control** means that participants have the right to make their own decisions about their supports.



People with complex needs often do not get choice and control because

- They need to rely on parents or other carers to plan or manage their supports
- They do not have family or other supporters to help them
- They do not go to their own planning meetings







- The NDIS is too hard
- Staff do not have the skills to support participants to do what they want to do.



There are not enough services to support clients with complex needs so people often do not get a choice.



This means the only house choice for many people with complex needs is group homes.



Lots of group homes for people with complex needs are not safe.



People with complex needs may be hurt or not cared for properly in **group homes**.



**Group homes** are special houses where people with a disability live together.



People with complex needs should get the support they need to make their own decisions.



We think the NDIA should train planners and Local Area Coordinators about how to support participants with complex needs.



We think the NDIA should support parents, carers and others who support people with complex support needs.



The NDIA must make sure there are enough services to support people with complex needs properly.



The NDIA should do more to make sure services are good and safe.

## Restrictive practices



**Restrictive practices** control or stop someone's movement. They can be used to stop someone from hurting themselves, other people or things.

For example



- Giving someone tablets or medicine to stop them hurting themselves
- Locking doors to stop someone running out onto the road.



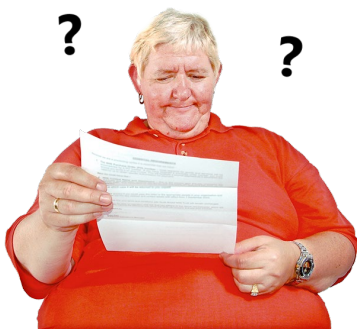
There are rules about using restrictive practices in the NDIS.



Restrictive practices must be written in a document called a **Positive Behaviour Support Plan** or PBS plan for short.



A **PBS Practitioner** works with the person and their supporters to write a **PBS plan**.



PBS plans have lots of hard words and are very hard to understand.



Support workers and families may use too many restrictive practices because they think the PBS plan says they should.



PBS plans often want to change the person instead of changing the problems around them.



We think the NDIS should make sure that PBS Practitioners are properly trained to do their job.



NDIS needs to make sure participants have a say on what restrictive practices are in their plan.



Participants and their supporters should get good support to make decisions about restrictive practices.



We think all PBS plans should be about

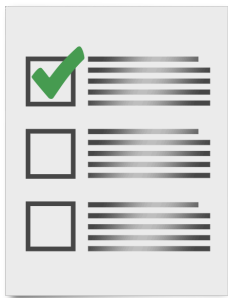
- the person
- their rights
- living a good life.





We think the NDIS laws and rules should be changed to make sure that

- restrictive practices are used less
- there is a way to check on restrictive practices that is the same everywhere in Australia
- service providers have plans to use less restrictive practices.



## The voices of people with complex needs



Most of what we know about complex needs is from parents, supporters and advocates.



We do not often hear the voices of people with complex needs.



We almost never hear the voices of people with complex needs who are

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- culturally diverse
- homeless
- in prison.





The NDIA should do more to hear the voices of these people.

## What happens next?



The Review will look closely at what everyone has said about the NDIS.



The Review will give their Final Report to the Government with ideas about how the NDIS could be better.



The Final Report is due in October 2023.



**Australian Government**

The Government will decide what to do about the NDIS Review's ideas.