



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Review of the NDIS Act

A summary of the review and
what the Government will do

Easy Read version



How to use this document



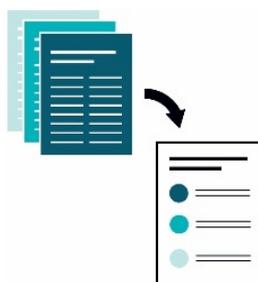
The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) wrote this document. When you see the word 'we', it means DSS.



We have written this information in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.



We have written some words in **bold**. We explain what these words mean. There is a list of these words on page 38.



This Easy Read document is a summary of 2 other documents:

- *Review of the NDIS Act Report*
- *Government Response to the Review of the NDIS Act Report.*



You can find the other documents on our website at www.dss.gov.au



You can ask for help to read this document. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What's in this document?

What is this document about?	4
About the review	7
Why did we do the review?	8
Who did we talk to?	9
What people told us	10
About the recommendations	14
What the review recommended and what the Government is doing	16
Starting the Participant Service Guarantee	17
Changing the law and rules	22
Working together	29
What happens next?	36
More information	37
Word list	38
Contact us	40

What is this document about?



This document is about a review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



The NDIS is a way of providing support to people with disability around Australia.

NDIA



It is managed by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

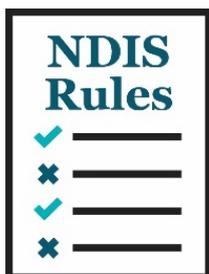


We want to make sure that people who use the NDIS have a good experience.

There is a law and rules about how the NDIS works.



The law is called the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*.



The rules are called the National Disability Insurance Scheme Rules.



We asked an expert to look at the law and rules.



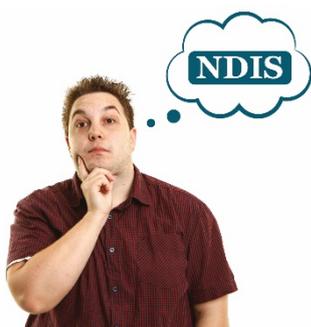
His name was Mr David Tune.

Mr Tune is **independent**.



An independent person is someone who doesn't work for the Government or the NDIA.

They have their own ideas and opinions.



For the review, we also talked to people in the community about what they think about the NDIS.



Mr Tune listened to what people told us.



Mr Tune wrote a report to explain what he found.

This document is a summary of:



- the problems people are having with the NDIS



- how Mr Tune says the NDIS needs to change



- what the Government will do to change the NDIS.

About the review

Why did we do the review?



The NDIS is helping many people with disability get the supports and services they need.



But some people aren't getting what they need.



And some people are frustrated.

Some of the problems are:



- it can take a long time to get an NDIS plan for their supports



- some people find it hard to understand how NDIS planning should work.



We wanted to find out how we could fix these problems.

Who did we talk to?



To find out how the NDIS needs to change, we talked to people around Australia.

We talked to:



- people with disability



- family members and carers



- **advocates** – people who speak up for people with disability



- disability service providers



- state and territory governments.

What people told us

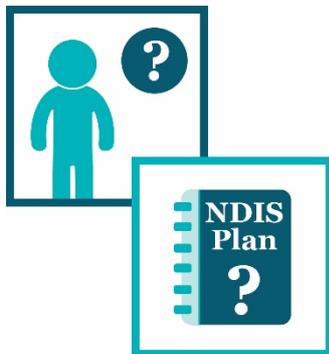


We learned a lot from what people told us.

We learned 5 main things.



1. People sometimes have to wait a long time for decisions about the NDIS.



These decisions can be about:

- who can use the NDIS
- what supports can be in your NDIS plan.



Having to wait makes people feel frustrated.



2. People don't always have decisions about the NDIS explained to them.



People aren't told:

- how decisions have been made
- why decisions have been made.



And some decisions aren't made in the same way for everybody.



3. People don't have enough information about the NDIS.

NDIS



This means they don't understand the NDIS properly.

And they don't know how to:



- do the things they need to do to take part in the NDIS



- get the supports they need



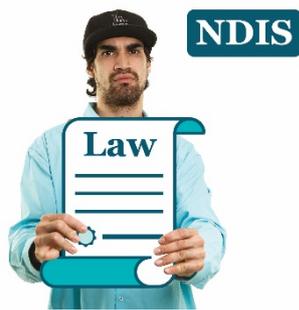
- use their supports.



4. The law and rules say that NDIS supports must be 'reasonable and necessary'.



But it isn't clear what the law means by 'reasonable and necessary'.



5. Some parts of the law make it hard for people to use the NDIS.



People want processes that are easy to follow and to get the support they need.



You can find more information about what people said on the Engage website
www.engage.dss.gov.au

About the recommendations



In his report, Mr Tune made a list of **recommendations** for the Government.



Recommendations are ideas about changes that can be made to fix a problem.



Mr Tune made 29 recommendations.



The Government is already working on 27 of the recommendations.



The Government also agrees with the other 2 recommendations.



The Government is thinking about how they will work on those 2 other recommendations.

On the following pages, we give you a summary of:



- the recommendations



- what the Government is doing.

What the review recommended and what the Government is doing

Starting the Participant Service Guarantee



A **participant** is someone who takes part in the NDIS.



A **guarantee** is like a promise.



The Participant Service Guarantee will be a new set of rules for the NDIA.



Guarantee

In this document, we call it the Guarantee.



The Guarantee will make the way the NDIS works:

- simpler
- better.

Mr Tune said that the Guarantee should:



- be included in the NDIS rules



- list the standards the NDIA has to meet.

The standards would include:



- how quickly the NDIA has to do things



- how well the NDIA works with people with disability.



He said that there should be set times for the NDIA to do their work.



For example, if someone asks why the NDIA made a decision, the NDIA needs to answer within 28 days.

He said that the NDIA must:



- give participants information that is clear and easy to understand



- answer participants' questions and meet their needs



- respect and listen to participants



- make sure participants are confident about taking part in planning their supports



- connect with other services so participants get the supports they need.



He also said that the NDIA must give people more information about the decisions they make.



Participants should be able to ask for a draft NDIS plan before it's approved.



This means they can see all the supports that have been put in the plan.



Participants should be able to ask why the NDIA has made a decision about them.



And the NDIA will have to answer by a certain time.



Mr Tune also said that the Government and the NDIA should find better ways to make sure the NDIS is working well.



This will include a survey to find out what people think.

What will the Government do?



The Government agrees with all of Mr Tune's ideas about the Guarantee.



The Government will make these ideas part of the NDIS law and rules.



The NDIA has already started following some parts of the Guarantee.

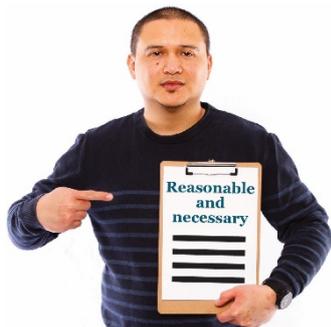


The Government plans to make the Guarantee law in 2021.

Changing the law and rules



Mr Tune recommended that we make some changes to the NDIS law and rules so that they work better for participants.



For example, Mr Tune said that we should have a better explanation of what 'reasonable and necessary' means.

NDIA



He also said that the way the NDIA works should be simpler and easier.



For example, you should only have to tell the NDIA the name of your doctor once.



The NDIA can ask a participant to have an **independent assessment**.



An independent assessment is a way to check your ability to do certain things.



This will help the NDIA make sure the participant has an NDIS plan that suits their needs.



The independent assessment is free.



Mr Tune said there should be better support for people with mental health problems.



The NDIS law should be clearer about when mental health problems are **permanent**.



This means that a problem keeps happening over time. It never goes away.



Mr Tune said the NDIS rules should be changed for children with disability.

These changes would include:



- looking at what the family already does to support the child



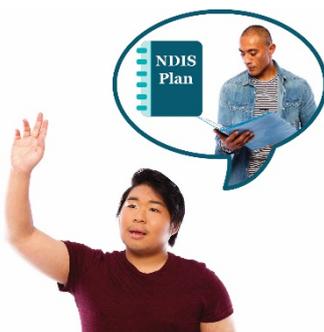
- supporting families to take a break



- helping families to look after their children at home.



Mr Tune also said that NDIS plans should be easier to change.



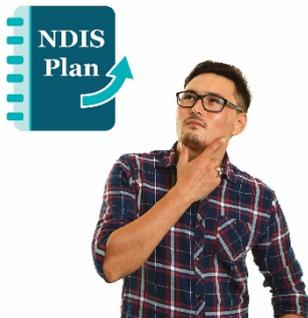
Sometimes, people ask for a decision to be **reviewed**.



If something is reviewed, we look at it closely to see if it is working well.



It's important to be able to change your plan while you are waiting for the review.



Mr Tune said the NDIA should improve the way it works so that people can track what is happening with their plan.

For example, a participant could use their computer to find out:



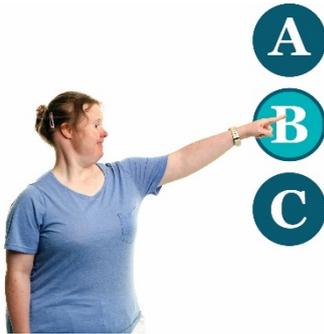
- how their application is going



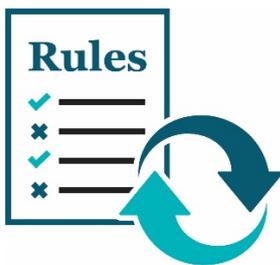
- how much longer it will take to be approved.



Mr Tune said that people should be able to use their plans in different ways.



This will give people more choice and flexibility.



Mr Tune said the rules should be changed about the work that **support coordinators** do.



Support coordinators help you to work out:

- what to put in your NDIS plan
- how to use your plan.



Mr Tune said that support coordinators should be independent.



This means they shouldn't work for someone who provides the supports in your plan.



This will help to protect participants.



Mr Tune also said the NDIA should help participants get supports when there isn't much available in their area.



For example, you might live in an area where there aren't many service providers.



Mr Tune said there should be more protection for people who use a **plan manager**.



A plan manager is someone who manages your NDIS supports for you.



Mr Tune also said that parts of the NDIS law and rules are out of date and need to be updated.



For example, parts of the law and rules still talk about starting the NDIS.

What will the Government do?



The Government agrees with these recommendations.



The Government is making some of these changes already.



They will make the other changes to the law and rules that Mr Tune suggested.

Working together



Mr Tune said that the NDIA and governments around Australia need to work together to make the NDIS better.



Mr Tune said that governments around Australia should be clear about what the NDIS does and doesn't do.

Governments need to look at things like:



- how to support people with long-term health problems



- the way people are helped to make decisions



- how to make sure day-to-day living costs, like food and rent, aren't doubled up in a participant's supports.



Mr Tune said the Government should pay for support to help people with disability use the NDIS.



He also said there should be **accessible** versions of the NDIS law and rules.



If information is accessible:

- it is available in different ways
- people with different abilities can use it.



The NDIA should have clear information for people who don't know about the NDIS.



The information should also be clear for people who are not sure if they want to apply.

The information should be helpful for:



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



- people who speak languages other than English



- people with mental health problems.



Mr Tune said that the NDIA should look at how **Supported Independent Living (SIL)** is put in people's NDIS plans.



SIL gives people support with daily tasks so they can learn to live independently.



Mr Tune said that participants and their families should be more involved in making decisions about their SIL supports.



Mr Tune said the NDIA should find and share good information about disability supports.



This information should tell us what supports work best.

The information should come from:



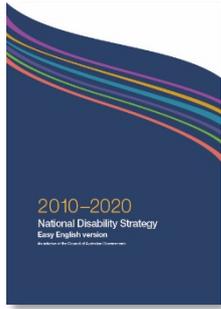
- governments



- experts



- researchers.



Mr Tune talked about the National Disability Strategy.



This is a 10-year plan for people with disability in Australia.



The current strategy ends in 2020.



The new strategy is being made now.



Mr Tune said the new strategy should talk about how it:



- works with the NDIS
- makes the NDIS better.

What will the Government do?

NDIS 



All Australian governments and the NDIA are working together to make the NDIS better.



For example, all governments in Australia are working together on the new National Disability Strategy.



The Government is working with state and territory governments to make sure their systems work well together.

NDIS



The NDIA is working on new programs to help more people understand the NDIS.



And the Government is making information more accessible.



All governments have agreed on a disability research plan.



Part of the plan is to create information that helps participants make decisions.

What happens next?



The Government will make changes to the NDIS law and rules.



We will share these changes with the community to find out what people think.



We plan to change the law in 2021.



But we are making some of the improvements now.



All Australian governments and the NDIA will keep working together on the changes that need to be made to the NDIS.



You can find out where this work is up to on our website www.dss.gov.au

More information

Word list



Accessible

If information is accessible:

- it is available in different ways
- people with different abilities can use it.



Advocates

People who speak up for people with disability.



Guarantee

A guarantee is like a promise.



Independent

An independent person is someone who doesn't work for the Government or the NDIA.

They have their own ideas and opinions.



Independent assessment

This checks a person's ability to do certain things.



Participant

Someone who takes part in the NDIS.



Permanent

When a problem is permanent, it means it keeps happening. It never goes away.



Plan manager

Someone who manages your NDIS supports for you.



Recommendations

Ideas about changes that can be made to fix a problem.



Reviewed

If something is reviewed, we look at it closely to see if it is working well.



Support coordinators

Support coordinators help you to:

- work out what to put in your plan
- how to use your plan.



Supported Independent Living

SIL provides support with daily tasks so that people can live independently.

Contact us



NDISConsultations@dss.gov.au



NDIS Consultations

Department of Social Services

GPO Box 9820

Canberra ACT 2601



www.dss.gov.au

You'll find the information under the heading '2019 review of the NDIS Act and the new NDIS Participant Service Guarantee'.



The Information Access Group created this Easy Read document using stock photography and custom images. The images may not be reused without permission. For any enquiries about the images, please visit www.informationaccessgroup.com. Quote job number 3386.