

001 – National Disability Insurance Scheme

Handling: Blair Comley, Graeme Head

Thriving Kids / state and territory negotiations

If asked - negotiations with states and territories on track?

Key messages

- Our government is playing our part, working with states and territories to help ensure Australians can access more affordable health care, that we have a robust system of disability supports, and that the NDIS is sustainable over the long term.
- We are negotiating in good faith with states and territories.
- We have indicated we want agreement by the end of the year and that is what we are working towards.
- I'm not going to conduct a running commentary on those negotiations through this forum.

Key facts

- We have offered a significant increase in Commonwealth funding for public hospitals through the NHRA over five years from 1 July 2026.
- We've also committed \$2 billion (capped and cost-matched by states) over five years from 2026-27 to establish Thriving Kids to build additional supports that can meet more children's needs outside the NDIS.
- This offer addresses the growing pressures in our health and disability systems.

If asked – failing hospitals?

Key messages

- Labor believes every person with disability should be discharged from hospital as soon as they are medically ready.
- This Government has significantly invested to ensure people with disability don't spend a day longer in hospital than medically necessary.

Key facts

- The national median for the number of days between an NDIS participant being medically ready for discharge and when they are discharged in August 2025 was 0 days, indicating the significant proportion of participants discharged on the same day as they become medically ready.
- Since 2022, we have almost halved the average number of days it takes to discharge an NDIS participant when they are medically ready.
 - In October 2022, it took on average 41 days.
 - In March 2025, it took on average 16 days.

If asked – DRMC?

Key messages

- The Disability Reform Ministerial Council (DRMC) has important work to do across disability policy, including the recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission, on provider viability, and cracking down on fraud and abuse of the NDIS.
- Commonwealth, State and Territory Disability Ministers met on 7 November in Sydney and online for the third DRMC meeting of 2025.
- Ministers received and discussed an update from The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Ageing and Minister for Disability on the continuing health and disability negotiations, including Foundational Supports and Thriving Kids. **- Refer to communique.**

Key facts

- The Thriving Kids negotiation is being conducted outside the DRMC, and officials are meeting very regularly to make progress on those dimensions.

Participant exits, plan sizes and New Framework Planning

If asked – kicking people off the NDIS?

Key message

- Eligibility reassessments are a standard process undertaken by the NDIA.
- Eligibility is reassessed to ensure all participants meet the residence, disability or early intervention requirements.
- A reassessment may find that a person has benefited from early intervention supports and that they have met their targeted milestones so they can live independently beyond the NDIS.
- This is a good thing and shows early intervention works.

Key facts

- The number of participants accessing the NDIS continues to increase.
- 751,446 participants have approved NDIS plans (as at 30 September 2025).
- This is an increase of 12,032 participants since June 2025 (1.6%)

If asked – plan reductions?

Key message

- I know that plan reassessments can be stressful for participants.
- I want to assure participants that there have been no changes to how or why plan reassessments are conducted.
- Reassessments most commonly occur when a participant's situation changes substantially—such as health, living arrangements, or support needs.

Key facts

- Data from the latest Quarterly Report indicates that plan budgets have continued to grow.

- When the Agency undertakes as plan review, plans are more than twice as likely to increase after plan reassessment rather than decrease.
- In the 3 months to 30 September 2025, 69% of reassessed plans had an increase in total funding amount compared to 31% a decrease in total funding.
- Over the 2-year period to September 2025, average plan budgets increased 4.7% per annum.

If asked – human decision making in New Planning Framework?

- This Government is delivering a fairer, more consistent and empowering experience for NDIS participants, in line with the NDIS Review. Tens of thousands of people were involved in this process.
- The support needs assessment is not an automated process. The assessment will be a semi-structured conversation undertaken by trained and skilled assessors with participants and their families, support people and carers at a suitable time and location.
- The disability community should not miss out on the benefits that come from using technology to streamline and improve disability services.
- Comparisons to illegal coalition policies like Robodebt are wrong, unhelpful, and are not a fair reflection on one of the recommendations that come out of Bonyhady and Paul's NDIS review.
- The Support Needs Assessment tool has a 20-year history of being used in the care sector. This is not an untested system, and there is an extensive period of co-design and trial of the tool and methodology which is currently underway.
- People with a disability should not be given the impression that this tool will be turned on tomorrow and used to set their plans the day after. There is an extensive process of co-design with the disability community that will continue to occur, including a trial to iron out concerns and issues that need to be addressed.

[IF REQUIRED – JSJ involvement]

- The NDIS plays such an important role in the lives of people with disability. They rightly feel proud and protective of the scheme.
- Community leaders have a responsibility to ensure that they are not unnecessarily or without basis causing fear and uncertainty for participants.
- My office and i offered you a comprehensive private briefing about the SNA tool and the New Framework Planning process. I would encourage you to rethink your decision not to take that offer up.
- We are all best served by ensuring that community leaders have the best possible information to share with the disability community. Fearmongering is not helpful.
- The important reforms progressed by this Government aim to ensure every dollar allocated to the NDIS makes a difference in participants' lives, and that the NDIS is sustainable into the future.

Key facts

- Participants will continue to be able to provide reports from treating health professionals where more complex support needs are identified, including assistive technologies, home modifications and disability-related health supports.
- As with the current approach, every plan must be approved by a delegate of the CEO. There will always be a human delegate reviewing a plan before it is approved. That decision will still be reviewable.
- If they are not satisfied with the internal review, participants retain the right to apply to the ART for review.

Fraud and Safety

If asked - addressing fraud?

Key messages

- The NDIS must be safe and operate with integrity. Every dollar taken by fraud is a dollar taken from someone who needs it.

- After a decade of neglect, Labor has taken fraud seriously by investing over \$500 million in tackling fraud and non-compliance.
- There are currently proposed legislative measures which are before the parliament that will also deal with fraud.

Key facts

- In 2020/21, there were less than 30 employees within the NDIA directly working on fraud and integrity activities.
- The system had blind spots. Claims submitted between 4.30pm and 6pm on a weekday couldn't be reviewed in NDIS systems before they were paid. Claims made every second weekend couldn't be reviewed in NDIS systems before they were paid.
- We have invested over \$500 million in tackling fraud and non-compliance.
- Now, all claims are visible in NDIS systems and can be analysed prior to payment.
- Previously, NDIS systems did not require participants to provide evidence for claims. They could claim tens of thousands of dollars per claim, without any description or evidence.
- Now, NDIS systems require an ABN and a text description, with evidence (such as an invoice) required for all claims over a certain threshold.
- Our Fraud Fusion taskforce has stopped millions in estimated fraud, with billions in NDIS payments alone currently under investigation.
- The Taskforce has launched more than 635 investigations, has close to 100 operations underway, and has referred 50 people to court.

If asked - system sufficiently regulated?

Key messages

- Government inherited a mess and is calmly and methodically working through improvements to ensure safety, integrity and quality – including registration.

- Important there are barriers to entry for bad actors and that regulators have visibility of the market.
- Registration needs to play an important role in ensuring people with a disability get the support they need.
- Registration is one way to achieve those things and doesn't operate in isolation.
- We are working through how registration, the obligations imposed on the registered community, and the regulatory approaches taken by agencies intersect to deal with the biggest problems facing the sector.

Key facts

- Labor has invested in the capacity of the NDIS Commission to regulate the market.
- The Commission's capacity was substantially improved by the record investment in the 2023/24 Budget of \$142.6 million – delivering an additional 320 new staff.

Financial sustainability

If asked – on track to 8%?

Key messages

- Since coming to Government, Labor has worked to stabilise the Scheme.
- We have introduced legislation to provide clarity about what can be included in plans and manage over-spending, as well as reforms to stop fraud and exploitation of participants.
- We are now on track to meet the 8% growth target by 2026-27.

Key facts

- When we came to Government, the Coalition had left the Scheme spiralling out of control, with growth over 22 per cent per year.
- NDIS participant plan cost growth has been tracking down substantially year on year – from 23% in 2022-23 to 10.8% in 2024-25.

- The Scheme is on track to meet the 8.0% growth target by 2026-27, in line with the Financial Sustainability Target agreed by National Cabinet.

If asked – difference between Budget and Thriving Kids?

Key messages

- Numbers always move around in a scheme of this size. We are confident that we are on track to meet the 8% growth target.
- When we came to Government, the Coalition had left the Scheme spiralling out of control, with growth over 22 per cent per year.
- Our Government's interventions are working – Scheme projections are lower than the AFSR last year.
- We are still negotiating in good faith with states and territories the details of Thriving Kids and current projections do not factor in the full scope of this work.

Key facts

- Scheme projections are \$1.2 billion lower than the June 2024 projections over the same period, and \$1.9 billion higher than the 2025-26 Budget.

If asked – impact of delays to NFP and Foundational Supports?

Key messages

- We're making changes to the NDIS to make it fairer, easier to navigate and more flexible to better support participants.
- Our Government listened to advice from the disability community that more time will improve the delivery of these reforms and minimise disruption for participants.
- There has been an extensive co-design and consultative process. This process continues. It is not accurate to suggest otherwise.
- These changes, shaped with the disability community, will support the people who need it today and ensure it is around to serve future generations.

- We are taking the time to get this right – working with states and territories and in consultation with the disability community.

Key facts

- Scheme projections are \$1.2 billion lower than the June 2024 projections over the same period.
- The \$7.7 billion increase to Scheme projections is offset by other changes including s33 funding periods and operational improvements made by the Agency.

If asked – lower rates of psychosocial disability?

Key messages

- There have been no changes to the eligibility process.
- The number of participants accessing the NDIS continues to increase.

Key facts

- The number of participants accessing the NDIS continues to increase.
- 751,446 participants have approved NDIS plans (as at 30 September 2025).
- This is an increase of 12,032 participants since June 2025 (1.6%)

Provider exits

If asked - sector viable?

Key messages

- This Government is committed to fostering a sustainable and diverse market that provides high quality supports to NDIS participants across Australia.
- We are taking active steps to support provider viability and strengthen the NDIS market.

- We are working on reforms to pricing, improved market monitoring and more proactive oversight and responses to sector challenges.

Key facts

- During the 12-month period 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, there were 247 committed exits of registered NDIS providers notified to the NDIA.
- Meanwhile, entries into the market continue to increase and the NDIS provider market continues to grow.
- In the June quarter there were 215,779 active providers delivering services through the NDIS – up from 167,409 in the same quarter a year earlier.
- Next month the NDIA Board intends to publish their workplan which will set out the steps they'll take as they move to greater differentiation within pricing.

This document has been released under the Freedom Of Information Act 1992 by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

AI Use in the NDIS

- Every decision related to a participant's plan or funding is made by a person.
- I want to assure people that the NDIA does not use artificial intelligence in systems that interact directly with participants or their families or nominees, or to determine decisions on NDIS eligibility or funding.
- We know the value of a participant being able to have a conversation with a person about their budget or plan.
- It's one of the reasons why our government has invested in more staff at the NDIA. That means more staff for participants to have a conversation with – so they can access the right supports.

Use of Copilot by the NDIA?

- Copilot is not enabled in any systems which directly interact with participants or providers, including access or funding decisions.

AI in Plans?

- Every decision made around a participant's plan or funding is made by a person.
- A planner or delegate makes decisions on a participant's plan based on the information and evidence gathered as through the planning process.
- We know how important human interaction can be. We want to make the planning process fairer, more consistent and easier to navigate for participants.
- It's why we are delivering a new planning approach which will be centred around a strengths-based, structured conversation with an accredited assessor.
- We are co-designing this approach with the community

Background

Old Framework Planning used machine learning to create benchmarked plans based off 'typical support packages'. The typical support package is adjusted by a planner or delegate to create the final plan. The machine learning component was developed by the NDIA internally and was timebound (update completed in 2022).

*New Framework Planning will **not use machine learning**.*

The outcomes from the ICAN will be combined with answers from the personal and environmental circumstances questionnaire to determine a budget. These calculations will be incorporated into a set of Cat A rules to be

agreed with states and territories. Development and testing of the approach is underway.

Providers using AI in preparing reports?

- NDIS participants deserve to be supported by providers who are ethical, honest and fully compliant with Australian law.
- We know the overwhelming majority of providers are committed to delivering high quality supports to participants and are doing the right thing.
- It is vital allied health professionals provide accurate information, so NDIS participants receive the right disability supports.
- Allied health professionals must act within the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency Code of Conduct, and the NDIA may alert our fraud or integrity teams to any anomalies identified when assessing information, including reports, provided to the Agency.
- Our Government is also delivering a new way of planning that will be fairer and more consistent for participants, that can reduce reliance on reports, if a participant wishes.
- We know it can take a long time and cost a lot of money for people to source supporting evidence in advance of a planning meeting.
- Thousands of pages of documents can be generated as a result of this process, and in several cases, they appear to have been generated by AI.
- We think there is a better way.
- The new planning approach will be a strengths-based, semi-structured conversation that accounts for a person's holistic needs.
- It will mean the level of supports a person receives won't depend on whether they can afford to have a report prepared.
- We want participants to use their time and funding to access NDIS supports that are right for them to pursue their goals and for providers and therapists to be freed up to spend time delivering supports to participants, not writing reports.

Estimates TPs

- **Is the NDIA cutting participant plans (plan reassessments underway)?**
 - The NDIS provides the reasonable and necessary disability related supports a participant requires, based on the functional impacts and the supporting evidence.
 - A participant's NDIS plan can increase or decrease depending on an individual's disability-related needs at plan reassessment.
 - Reassessments most commonly occur when a participant's situation changes substantially—such as health, living arrangements, or support needs—and therefore requires full plan reassessment rather than a plan variation or plan continuation.
 - When the Agency undertakes a plan review, plans are more than twice as likely to increase after plan reassessment rather than decrease.
 - In the 3 months to 30 September 2025, 69% (36,791) of reassessed plans had an increase in total funding amount compared to 31% (16,885) of reassessed plans had a decrease in total funding.
 - For this same period, the total annualised plan increase was \$1.69 billion annualised, compared to reduction of \$436 million.
- **Is the NDIA moving to automate planning decisions under NFP?**
 - In response to calls from NDIS participants and the broader disability community, the Government commissioned an independent NDIS Review, which received thousands of submissions. Acting on this feedback, legislative changes to the NDIS Act were introduced in October 2024 to improve how the Scheme works.
 - These changes –recommended by the NDIS Review, include a new planning approach and Support Needs Assessments that are designed to assess a person holistically.
 - Support Needs Assessments look at all of a person's disability related support needs and are a more consistent way to determine a reasonable and necessary budget so participants can access the NDIS supports they need.
 - People trained as Support Needs Assessors will use the I-CAN v6 tool as part of a semi-structured interview that focuses on participants' strengths and support needs, rather than functional impairments. The tool will be used by these staff members alongside a new personal and environmental circumstances questionnaire which will collect additional information required to understand a participant's individual support needs.
 - Participants will continue to be able to provide reports from their treating health professionals, on request by the Agency, if they have more complex support needs, including for needs such as assistive technologies, home modifications and disability related health supports.
 - This is not an automated process. Assessments will be conducted by trained and accredited assessors who have experience working with people with disability.
 - The assessor will use the information about frequency and intensity of support need in domains of a participant's life, through the Support Needs Assessment to identify a participant's need for NDIS supports.
 - Consistent with current planning, the CEO's delegate must approve every plan. There will always be a human delegate reviewing a plan before it is approved.

- Participants will continue to have the right to request a review of their plan, including through the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART). The ART will be able to order a replacement Support Needs Assessment.
 - At any time, as is the case now, a participant will also be able to request a reassessment or variation of their plan prior to its end date if their circumstances change.
 - The new approach will see a move to longer plans and more flexible budgets where flexible funding may be used for a range of supports they need as a result of their impairment/s, provided those supports are appropriately funded by the NDIS.
 - The NDIA is working with the Department to draft necessary policies to inform development of the Rules to outline the Support Needs Assessment and Budget approach. We are already working with the disability community through this process and will continue that work.
 - The details of the new approach are being designed in consultation with NDIS participants, the disability community, and jurisdictions. This work is ongoing, and we are now aiming to introduce changes to planning from mid-2026.
- **Is the Agency doing enough to consult with the disability community on the changes?**
 - The Agency has an established ecosystem of co design and advisory groups to ensure lived experience is at the heart of NDIS reform and participant feedback informs design and implementation of new framework planning.
 - Over the last 12 months (October 2024 - October 2025) the Agency held 135 engagements where NFP/SNAs were discussed, involving 6,058 participants, providers, and other stakeholders.
 - A range of further engagement and co-design is currently underway including testing of tools and resources, co-design of inclusive service guidelines and feedback on experience with new processes.
 - The Agency has developed a new framework planning pool where participants are invited to register to join a pool of people who will be invited to participate in activities and provide feedback that help improve the new planning approach. Feedback received will assist in refining the new approach.
 - Engagement and co-design with participants, families, providers, and the broader disability community will continue in 2026 to ensure stakeholders have a voice in shaping the experience.
 - This will include webinars, focus groups, workshops and briefings with participants, families, carers, the disability sectors, and providers.
 - **Are there points in the Guardian Article that are correct / incorrect?**
 - I note the Guardian Article released yesterday.
 - The Guardian referred to the NDIS Review's recommendations and the recent procurement of the I-CAN, the new Assessor, the individual's personal and environmental circumstances questionnaire and other targeted modules. These are all correct and key components of new framework planning and the introduction of a Support Needs Assessment.
 - What isn't correct, is the statement 'Under the changes, human involvement in deciding support for NDIS participants will be dramatically reduced.'

- The new Supports Needs Assessor we will be spending more time with Participants than we do today. Assessors will meet with the participant, their family, support people and carers at time that suits them to have a conversation about their needs.
- The assessment process will be collaborative and provide opportunities for the assessor to play back what they have heard and correct any errors with the participant.
- The article also referred to “Funding and support plans for national disability insurance scheme participants will be generated by a computer program”. This needs to be clarified that as with current planning, the CEO’s delegate must approve every plan. Under the new approach a person’s support needs will be identified through a conversation with a Support Needs Assessor and documented in a support needs assessment report. Information from the report will then be used to develop a participant’s budget through the application of Rules, which are currently being developed with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. There will always be a human delegate reviewing a plan before it is approved.
- The article indicated that ‘there would be no requirement for staff to consider independent medical evidence provided by NDIS participants in the development of plans’. Again, this is incorrect, Participants will continue to be able to provide reports from their treating health professionals, on request by the Agency, if they have more complex support needs, including for needs such as assistive technologies, home modifications and disability related health supports.
- **Is the NDIA properly regulating the systems (ie claiming and integrity)**
 - The NDIA's compliance and enforcement activities give effect to the Agency's legal functions to prevent, detect, investigate and respond to misuse or abuse of, or criminal activity involving National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) money.
 - The NDIA aims to make it easier to do the right thing and harder to do the wrong thing.
 - We focus on financial risks caused by people doing the wrong thing and respond to those risks according to the extent and nature of the harm they cause.
 - We understand that while a majority of people intend to do the right thing with NDIS money, some do not.
 - In all actions we are committed to ensuring participant safety and the continuity of genuine disability-related NDIS supports.
 - We are focused on designing systems and controls that support compliant behaviour. For example, we are strengthening payment systems to ensure non-compliant claiming is identified and stopped prior to processing.
 - We also have a range of detection, investigation and response methods in place which are all increasing in maturity as systems, capability and partnerships improve.
 - We use data and intelligence to target entities (businesses or individuals) suspected of non-compliance or fraud. We may educate, engage and caution targeted entities. We may review and monitor their spending, claims and payments. These reviews help safeguard participants’ plans and provide a layer of integrity over high-risk providers to protect participants from being exploited.
 - Where we detect significant issues, we have a range of powers such as raising debt and /or referring for criminal prosecutions.

- **Is the NDIA failing to control costs in the Scheme?**
 - The 2024–25 AFSR projections showed the NDIA is on track to meet National Cabinet’s NDIS growth target made in April 2023 - from 9.4% in 2025–26 to rates below 8% from 2026–27 onwards.
 - Overall, the projection of Scheme expenditure in the 2024–25 AFSR for the 4 years to June 2029 is within 0.5% (\$1.2 billion) of projected expenditure
 - Importantly, the growth of the Scheme has been reducing considerably over the past 3 years, reducing from 23% in 2022-23 to 10.8% in 2024-25 and an estimate of 9.4% in 2025-26
- **Are NDIA pricing decisions having an adverse impact on the NDIS provider sector?**
 - NDIS price limits are set based on a range of evidence-based factors, including supply and demand in the market, prices in other markets and broader economic factors. The Agency benchmarks pricing using data from Medicare, private health insurance claims and 13 comparable government schemes.
 - Price limits are set to reflect fair, sustainable services costs, whilst participant budgets are determined through a process that considers an individual’s disability supports needs.
 - At June 2025, there were over 263,000 active providers delivering NDIS services. This number continues to grow year on year.
 - The provider market is maturing as the Scheme matures, meaning some providers are consolidating or exiting particular services.
 - Whilst there has been a slight increase in provider exits over the last 2 years, there has not been a decrease in the growth of the provider market overall, which suggests that current pricing is not a barrier for providers to operate successfully.
 - The Agency is undertaking significant work to improve our pricing approach. This includes the Quality Supports Pilots (SIL, Support Coordination and Therapy) which are examining the features and costs of delivering high-quality supports, considering both the value providers deliver and the benefits experienced by participants.
 - These pilots will inform the Annual Pricing Review 2025-26 which is exploring more differentiated approaches to pricing and market stewardship to better reflect the diversity of supports, delivery contexts and participant needs across the NDIS.

My question is to the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Senator McAllister.

Why has the Albanese Government introduced a new NDIS support needs assessment tool?

It can take a long time and cost a lot of money for people to source supporting evidence to have a planning meeting. There is a better way.

That's why the NDIA is introducing a comprehensive support needs assessment.

I can inform the chamber that after an open procurement process, the NDIA has signed an agreement with the University of Melbourne to deliver a way to assess people's needs that's tried and tested, and that consistently determines the support needs of a person with disability.

It's called the Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs version 6. It's more commonly known as ICAN.

It has been already been successfully adapted for use in programs such as the Government's Disability Support for Older Australians program for almost 5 years.

It will be an assessment of a person's support needs, rather than their functioning.

The assessment will be conducted through a semi-structured interview process, allowing the assessor to adapt the assessment to the specific participant and their needs.

It can be completed in-person, such as in a participant's home or in an NDIS office, or virtually.

And in its current form, the assessment usually takes 1.5 to 3 hours, depending on the complexity of the individual's support needs.

Now this will not be an automated system. Assessments will be conducted by trained and accredited assessors.

It will focus on what support a participant needs to be able to do the things they want and need to do.

The new support needs assessment will mean the level of supports a person receives won't depend on whether they can afford to have a report prepared.

Because we want NDIS participants to use their time and funding to access NDIS supports that are right for them to pursue their goals.

WORDS: 296

How will the support needs assessment tool assess the needs of such a broad range of disabilities?

The Support Needs Assessment tool – the ICAN - has been designed for and tested with a wide range of disability groups.

It is comprehensive and designed to capture the range of areas in which a person might need support, regardless of their disability or reason for the support.

These Support Needs Assessments will be conducted through a semi-structured interview process, allowing the assessor to adapt the assessment to the specific participant and their needs.

I want to assure the senate that where a participant has an impairment that impacts their communication, assessors will adapt the assessment for that participant.

For example, assessors will be trained to support non-verbal communication, and participants can also be supported in their assessment by trusted support people.

The use of one tool, delivered in an individualised way, supports consistency and equity in the support needs assessment process while still ensuring the broad range of support needs of NDIS participants are captured.

The partnership includes support for modifications for participants with complex needs and circumstances.

WORDS: 169

What is the Government's rationale for implementing reforms to the NDIS such as the support needs assessment?

The Albanese Government has introduced significant reforms to put participants back at the heart of the NDIS.

That includes listening to the recommendations made by the Independent Review which heard from thousands of people with disability alongside Disability Representative Organisations.

Our reforms aim to ensure every dollar in the Scheme makes a difference in participants' lives, and that the NDIS is sustainable into the future.

The NDIS Review found that people were confused about what they could use their funding on.

Participants found the rules about how funding could be spent opaque and confusing.

This Government is ensuring the Scheme is equitable and inclusive, so that participants with significant and permanent disability receive the supports they need.

We are midway through this reform journey and are listening to feedback from the community on how these changes are being implemented.

WORDS: 156

NDIS, Disability and Carers Estimates Opening Statement

Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words. As it has not been too long since we were last here, I'll keep my remarks brief.

The Albanese Government is committed to the NDIS as a world-leading part of Australia's social fabric. We are focused on ensuring a sustainable NDIS that continues to provide life-changing supports for people with significant and permanent disability.

New Planning Framework

One of my priorities for this portfolio is improving the participant experience.

As identified by the NDIS Review, the current approach to planning is inconsistent, confusing and cost-intensive. The NDIS Review recommended a fairer approach that is easier to navigate.

The NDIA is continuing to work with the University of Melbourne and the Centre for Disability Studies, disability representatives and participants to develop the new approach to planning.

This new approach – which will deliver fairer, more consistent and more transparent outcomes – puts a semi-structured conversation between a participant and an assessor at the heart of the planning process.

We're committed to a strengths-based approach that understands each individual NDIS participant's disability support needs.

Importantly, this process will be collaborative.

It will provide opportunities for participants, their families and supporters to ensure the information is accurate.

A simpler, more transparent approach will give participants greater clarity and confidence in how their disability support needs are assessed and funded.

I know there's a lot more work to do here. I want to thank disability representative organisations and disability advocates for working with us as we develop the new planning framework.

We are committed to working through these changes with the disability community and states and territories before they are rolled out in mid-2026.

Integrity and fraud

As Minister, I have made it clear that the NDIS must operate safely and with integrity. Those who defraud the NDIS are stealing from the hundreds of thousands of Australians who rely on the lifechanging support the NDIS delivers.

The updated Statement of Expectations to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission outlines my priorities to uplift quality, ensure safety and take a hard line on fraud in the NDIS, as their regulatory approach matures.

I have also introduced a second amending Bill focused on Integrity and Safeguarding, which is currently being considered by the Senate Committee. This Government is committed to tougher penalties for misconduct and unsafe practices, as well as strengthening the monitoring, compliance and enforcement powers of the NDIS Commission.

Just this morning we announced that we are cracking down on misleading and deceptive advertising that targets NDIS participants and their families.

Every dollar taken by fraud is a dollar taken from someone who needs it. And where we see fraud, we often see a range of other harms to participants – from low quality services to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Labor takes fraud seriously. After a decade of neglect, we have invested over \$500 million in tackling fraud and non-compliance, and more than \$470 million to ensure the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission has the resources it needs to ensure Australians with disability get safe and quality supports.

Scheme Sustainability (AFSR)

I welcome the release of the Annual Financial Sustainability Report from the NDIA. The Report indicates that the NDIS continues on a pathway to sustainable growth, in line with the financial sustainability framework set by National Cabinet. This is a sign that Government initiatives to achieve sustainability are working.

Meeting this target will ensure the NDIS can continue to provide life-changing outcomes for future generations of Australians with permanent and significant disability. Any further reforms will be developed with participant outcomes and safety front of mind.

Thriving Kids and Foundational Supports

The Albanese Government is working on establishing a unified system of disability supports that sit outside the NDIS for people with disability across Australia. The goal of Thriving Kids is to strengthen that layer of supports so that children aged 8 and under with mild to moderate support needs and their families can access those supports in a straightforward, timely manner. This is in line with the NDIS Review findings.

We know we can do better for many of these children and their families. We are continuing to work closely with states and territories and the disability community.

NDIA CEO

I'd also like to welcome Graeme Head as CEO of the NDIA. Mr Head brings extensive experience in social policy and public administration, including his previous role as NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commissioner. His leadership will be crucial during this period of reform to strengthen the NDIS and put participants back at the centre of the Scheme.

Closing

I thank the Senators and members across the parliament for their continuing collegiality and collaboration. I know the disability community wants to see elected officials working together to support them. I look forward to continuing to work across Parliament to ensure we are reaching the best possible outcomes for NDIS participants and the broader disability community.

This document has been released under
the Freedom Of Information Act 1992 by
the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing