Your guide to newly acquired brain injury and the NDIS
We have written this booklet to assist patients with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), their families and carers to understand:

- the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- how to get access to the NDIS
- community disability support services (including Synapse and Brain Injury Australia)
- mainstream community services (including health, housing, education and work)
- who to contact if you need help with your plan or want to make a complaint.

What is the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?

**National**
A scheme provided across Australia

**Disability**
Eligible people with intellectual, physical, sensory, cognitive and psychosocial disability

**Insurance**
The NDIS takes a lifetime approach to invest in people with disability

**Scheme**
The NDIS is not a welfare system. It is designed to help people get the support they need to improve their skills and independence over time.

The NDIS will provide financial support for people with a disability to lead an ‘ordinary life’. It can help you build skills and be more independent as an individual with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). This means you will be able to do things by yourself or with less help.
Can I access the NDIS?

Do I meet the NDIS rules?
1. I need to be under the age of 65 years
2. I need to be an Australian Citizen or hold a permanent visa
3. My disability will not go away – intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory, physical impairments or mental health conditions
4. I am less able to do these things and need some support (in one or more of these areas): communication, learning, mobility, social interaction, self-care and self-management.

https://www.ndis.gov.au/people-disability/access-requirements

How to apply
- Contact the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on 1800 800 110 to get an access request form (ARF)
- Complete this form. A health care professional (doctor, nurse, social worker, physiotherapist or occupational therapist) can help you. Talk to them about documents you need to go with the form.
Writing goals

Having an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is a time for change and looking at what is best for me, my loved ones and carers. Under the NDIS, you will be able to talk about your new goals:

- What would you like to achieve in your life?
- Think of some goals that are individual and unique to you
- They can be smaller steps to a larger goal or dream and may take months or years to achieve.

My Participant Statement (About Me)

You can use this to write all your personal information including your goals and your supports.

Daily and weekly schedule

This is helpful to take with you to the NDIS planning meeting.

Who to invite to your planning meeting

You can invite any of your support people like family, friends, health care professionals and an interpreter (if you need one).

What is it?

At the meeting will be all your support people and a representative from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). This may be a Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or Support Planner. You can also invite an interpreter if you need one.

At the planning meeting, you can talk about what is important to you. You will take all your supporting documents including your goals, your daily/weekly schedule, your Participant Statement, photos of yourself and what you like doing, and any health reports you may have.
What will happen?
The NDIA representative or Support Planner will start off by asking a few questions about: your personal details, if you receive any community or mainstream supports, your safety at home and in the community, your goals and starting your plan.
You can be confident in the meeting – talk about what you can do, what you can’t do and what you would like to do. You can show pictures or other forms of communication if that is easier for you. You can ask questions or your support people can ask questions on your behalf.

“Reasonable and necessary supports”

Your funding plan will be based on what the NDIA considers reasonable and necessary supports. Reasonable means something that is fair. Necessary means something you must have.

Supports are funded by the NDIS in a range of areas to help you reach your goals: education, finding and keeping a job, getting out in the community, becoming more independent, living arrangements, health and well-being.

To be considered reasonable and necessary, a support must:
1. Be related to your disability and not include living costs related to your disability support needs
2. Be value for money and likely to benefit you as the participant
3. Take into account your informal supports (family, carers, friends and community services).

Types of support funded are listed on page X. They can include services, transport, therapy, aids and equipment.
Managing my funds

You will be asked how you would like to manage your NDIS funding during your planning meeting. There are 3 options (plan management, self-management and NDIA-managed funding).

1. A Plan Manager manages my plan

If you would like some help when you first get your plan, you can choose to pay for a Plan Manager out of your funding and they can pay your providers for you. Your Plan Manager cannot pay more than the NDIA set price limit for specific supports.

Your Plan Manager must be registered with the NDIS. A registered provider meets the NDIS quality and safety standards. If you decide to use a provider who is not registered, ensure they have the correct qualifications, training and safety checks. Your other support providers may or may not be registered with NDIS.

2. I manage my plan myself

If you manage your plan, NDIA provides you with funding to choose your own supports to help you meet your plan goals. This gives you control and flexibility over who provides your supports and when.

One or more different service providers or agencies can provide your supports. They may or may not be registered with the NDIS.

If you manage your own budget, you can negotiate the price you pay for your support. You need to make sure you have enough funding to cover the cost of your services for the duration of your plan. For example, in one year you will need 52 weeks of services.

You do not need to make a service booking for your self-managed supports as you pay your providers directly. You will need to set up a separate bank account to be used just for your funding and paying for your support services.


3. The NDIA manages my funding

With NDIA-managed funding, the NDIA pays your providers on your behalf. They can only pay providers who are registered with the NDIS. They cannot pay more than the NDIA set price limits.
The myplace Participant Portal

You will need to register on the myGov website. Once you have your myGov account, you need to sign in to myGov and access myplace which is where the Portal is. You will receive an activation code the first time you access myplace. Once you have an activation code, you can access myplace through the NDIS website or myGov:


What can I do on myplace?

- Create and view Payment Requests (previously known as claims)
- Create and manage Service Bookings (a new way of linking to a provider)
- View your contact details
- View messages from NDIS
- View referrals made for you
- Instant message with your linked providers
- Upload required documents
- Find service providers: support workers, therapists, support coordinators and providers of equipment and consumables.
Now you can start using your budget to buy the supports to help you achieve your goals, keep or improve your independence, stay safe and go out in the community. The NDIS funding plan will have a date on the front page – this is when your plan starts – and how much funding you have for 12 months.

Your Plan will have your goals outlined and the budget to help you reach these goals. There will be 3 types of support budgets that can be funded in your NDIS Plan – Core Funding, Capacity Funding and Capital Funding.

Examples of the type of support that can be provided are:

- personal care assistance, like showering, dressing or eating
- help in the home like cleaning or preparing meals
- transport to the shops and help with shopping
- support getting back into social activities or to see your GP
- support with work or going back to work
- therapy, for example physiotherapy, occupational therapy or speech therapy (rehabilitation is not funded)
- equipment, for example, a shower chair, or modifications to your home.

Choosing support services

If you have been funded for SUPPORT COORDINATION in your plan, find a suitable service that understands your disability and your needs. Your Support Coordinator will coordinate services according to your plan. They are your ‘go to’ person to link you with the most appropriate providers for your daily/weekly care, goals and accessing mainstream services.

If you are NOT funded for support coordination or just want to choose your own support services, it is best to screen services and agencies before starting a service agreement.
Questions to ask a service provider or agency before starting a service agreement:

- What experience do you have in working with clients with an Acquired Brain Injury?
- Are your support workers trained in the needs of a person with a disability?
- Can you work with complex care needs or challenging behaviours?
- What support services do you provide? Is your service flexible?
- How does your service provide 'person-centred' care and supports?
- What if I am not happy with my care worker or support person, or the services provided?
- Does your service monitor the quality of care it provides?

You will receive a phone call around two months before your first year plan is complete. The conversation will be about your Plan Review, and to arrange your next planning meeting. You can ask family, friends or advocates to attend the meeting. You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.
This planning meeting is a good way to make sure your plan is working for you.

- What worked well in your plan?
- What didn’t work well?
- Did you reach your goals or do you need to change your goals?
- What extra support do you need to meet your new goals?
- What kind of changes would you like to see in your new plan?
- You may need less money or a change in your budget if you have become more independent (if you can do things by yourself or with less help).

Important things to think about before going to the review planning meeting:

- Have you allocated hours and a budget for Support Coordination?
- How do you want to manage your funds? Do you want to change this?
- What kind of funding will help you to become more independent and socially active?
- Are you looking for some learning opportunities? Add these to your new goals
- How can mainstream services and supports also help you to lead an ‘ordinary life’?

- Local area Coordinator (LAC)
- Informal supports
- NDIA
- Administrative Appeals Tribunal
- NSW or Commonwealth Ombudsman
- Person responsible
- NDIA
- Q&S Commission
- Fair Trading
People in the community who can help you

Local Area Coordinator (LAC)
The NDIA has community partners who will deliver local area coordination (LAC) services and can help you:
1. Understand and access the NDIS
2. Create a plan, implement your plan and review your plan
3. Find supports in your local community
4. Understand mainstream supports like education, health and transport
5. Maintain your informal supports like family, friends and local community members.

Informal supports
Informal supports are unpaid family, carers and community support that are available to you. It is very important to maintain and include these supports in your plan so they can help you achieve your goals and advocate for you on your behalf (with your consent).
People who can help you with your plan

NDIA Planner
When you are eligible for NDIS, the NDIA may assign you a planner instead of a Local Area Coordinator. A planner will arrange to meet with you and anybody else you invite to the Planning Meeting. They may work directly with you and make decisions about your ‘reasonable and necessary supports’. However, they do not support you to implement your plan.

Provider/s:
An individual or organisation delivering products or services to you as an NDIS participant.

Registered providers:
https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/working-providers/find-registered-provider

Plan Manager
You can choose a Plan Manager to provide administration support for you. They will manage all invoices and bills, payments, spending and budget on your portal. You pay for a Plan Manager out of your funding.

Support Coordinator
We highly recommend that during your planning meeting you request funding for a Support Coordinator.
You as a participant of the NDIS have the right to:

1. Decide on the support you receive and be supported when you make those decisions
2. Choose someone or a group of people that you trust (‘nominees’) to access information on your behalf, or to make decisions on your behalf about the support
3. Request a new nominee if you are not happy with your nominee
4. Be safe and receive quality services from providers and their workers
5. Make a complaint if you are not happy with services or support
6. An interpreter if you need one.

Person responsible or legal guardian

You can choose someone to act on your behalf and you will need to put this in writing. They are called your nominee. You might have a nominee if you need help making decisions. The NDIA can also initiate you to have a nominee (usually family member) to make decisions for you about the NDIS.

A legal guardian may be appointed for an adult with impaired capacity. Having a legal guardian promotes supported decision making, which means you get support to make your own decisions.

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)

- Protects your rights by providing choice and control in finding the most appropriate supports and services
- Provides the opportunity to become more independent and feel included in the community
- Recognises and includes informal support/s and care arrangements
- Makes people in the community more aware of support people with a disability
- Welcomes feedback and will address complaints.
Quality and Safeguards Commission

- Has been set up to oversee the quality of services and make sure NDIS providers keep you safe
- They will help you as an NDIS participant, your family and carers to resolve concerns or complaints about any NDIS supports and services.

Department of Fair Trading

You have rights when you buy goods and services. As an NDIS participant, if you are not happy with a disability-related product or service you have paid for, you can use your rights under the Australian Consumer Law to get the problem fixed.

If you need to complain or appeal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am not happy about an decision about me and I want it reviewed</th>
<th>National Disability Insurance Agency</th>
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<tr>
<td>I am not happy with my provider of disability supports</td>
<td>Quality and Safeguards Commission</td>
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Talk to the staff at your local NDIA office or phone 1800 800 110
Email your complaint to: feedback@ndis.gov.au
Send a letter to: Customer Complaints, NDIA, GPO Box 700, Canberra ACT, 2601

1800 035 544
https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/complaints
If you need to complain or appeal (continued)

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<tr>
<th>I want to appeal an NDIS decision</th>
<th>Administrative Appeals Tribunal</th>
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<td>1800 228 333</td>
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<th>I am not happy with the NDIA’s actions</th>
<th>Commonwealth Ombudsman</th>
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<td>1300 362 072</td>
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There are many disability support services in your community that will provide information, advocacy, assessments and planning, support groups, referrals, socialisation, work placement and learning.
### Support for people with an Acquired Brain Injury

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<tr>
<th>Synapse – reconnecting lives</th>
<th>Phone: 1800 673 074</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Our vision is for a world where anyone affected by a brain injury is able to lead a life of quality, based on their own decisions and choices”</td>
<td><a href="http://synapse.org.au/support-services.aspx">http://synapse.org.au/support-services.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Brain Injury Australia</th>
<th>Phone: 1800 272 461</th>
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<td>“Information and gateway to nationwide referral for optimising the social and economic participation of all Australians living with brain injury”</td>
<td><a href="https://www.braininjuryaustralia.org.au/contact-us/">https://www.braininjuryaustralia.org.au/contact-us/</a></td>
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### Mainstream support

These include education, health, housing, justice or other community services. They are not funded by the NDIS. They are there to help you as a participant reach your goals, learn, be active socially and live an ordinary life.

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When someone acquires a new disability, NSW Health will provide the initial health care, and usually a period of inpatient (and sometimes outpatient) rehabilitation. However, rehabilitation does not always end when you leave hospital, and some rehabilitation services may continue as and when you need them.

During your hospital and rehabilitation stay, NSW Health staff will assist you to apply to the NDIS to test if you are eligible. They will also help you engage with service providers in the community (whether they are funded by the NDIS or not) to plan who will provide what you need when you leave hospital.

The NDIS has created three booklets to help people with disability throughout their NDIS journey. These are also available in Easy English.


Booklets available on the NDIS website

**Booklet 1**
- **Understanding the NDIS**
  About the NDIS, deciding whether to apply for the NDIS and accessing the NDIS.

**Booklet 2**
- **Planning**
  Understanding your current supports, creating an NDIS plan to achieve your goals, and receiving an approved NDIS Plan.

**Booklet 3**
- **Using your NDIS Plan**
  Understanding what’s in your plan, learning how to use it, choosing and managing support services, reviewing your plan and progress.
## Handy information and phone numbers

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous Disability Advocacy Service (IDAS)</td>
<td>02 4722 3524</td>
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<td>The Multicultural Disability Advocacy</td>
<td>02 9891 6400</td>
<td><a href="https://mdaa.org.au">https://mdaa.org.au</a></td>
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<td>Association of NSW (MDAA)</td>
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<td>After hours 13 11 14</td>
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When you go to your planning meeting, it is a good idea to take your PARTICIPANT STATEMENT, which has all your personal information and what supports you have in place now. It can also include your goals and how you would like to live. This statement will become part of your NDIS plan and you can change or add to it at any time.

This is an example:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Your name</th>
<th>(Participant’s Name)</th>
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<td>NDIS Number</td>
<td>(if you already have one)</td>
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<td>Name of person who may be assisting you with this statement or on your behalf</td>
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<td>Your relationship to this person who is helping you</td>
<td>(for example, parent, relative, carer, guardian or friend)</td>
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<td>This person is my</td>
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My Participant Statement (About Me)
My daily life
Write down the activities you do each day/week including education, work or social outings. Write down what is working well for you and what you would like to change. What do you enjoy doing and what are you good at? Or you can take photos of yourself and things you like doing or would like to do.

Example
Each day I have a shower and sit at home and watch TV, sometimes I sit in the sun or go for a walk to my letterbox. Since my Acquired Brain Injury, I don’t work or go to TAFE anymore. I go out every Thursday with my mum to the shops and my sister takes me on an outing every Saturday like the movies. My family supports are working well for me (mum and sister) but my mum has her own health problems and is getting older. What I would like to change is to have a lot more formal supports to help me with my personal care, help me to walk my dog and keep me physically active and healthy. I also would like to go to TAFE or community college to start learning again and maybe go to work. I love watching movies and eating pizza. I am good at playing games on my computer, drawing animals and keeping my room clean.

My current relationships and supports. Who are the important people in your life and how do they help?

The important people in my life are my mum and my sister, who help me with everything at home. I also have friends who visit sometimes and take me out and sometimes I have help from my auntie.

My living arrangements. Who do you usually live with? Are you in a house, unit, flat, granny flat or caravan? What changes do you need at your home to make your life easier?

Example
I live with my mum in her home at
I need a rail on the front and back steps to make it easier for me to get up and down, I need some supports along my driveway for safety. I need a rail in my bathroom and near my toilet. I think I also need easier eating utensils.

For more tips, look at the NDIS Booklet 2 (Planning):
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