



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

**Ray Griggs AO CSC**  
**Secretary**

Ref: EC21-003361

Mr Aaron Harper MP  
Chair, Health and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Harper,

Thank you for your letter of 23 November 2021, inviting a response from the Department of Social Services (the department) to your Committee on the provision of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) care services to inform the Committee's inquiry into the provision of primary, allied and private health care, aged care and NDIS care services and its impact on the Queensland public health system.

The department's response to the three areas raised in your correspondence is enclosed for the Committee's consideration. I note your request for a contact officer in my department the Committee could contact directly should you have any further questions. As the committee's terms of reference touch on a range of activities within the social services portfolio, I would invite you to write to me directly with any further questions.

The department's responses to other inquiries being undertaken by the Commonwealth Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS may be of interest to the Committee. The inquiry on *General Issues around the Implementation and Performance of the NDIS Inquiry* is ongoing and will look at the implementation, performance and governance of the NDIS. The 2021 report is publically available at [General Issues 2021 – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](https://aph.gov.au/General-Issues-2021-Parliament-of-Australia).

The *Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the NDIS Inquiry* is focused on how the NDIS is implemented and funded, and what supports are or should be available for people with disability in addition to the NDIS. This inquiry is accepting submissions until 28 February 2022. The Committee terms of reference and current published submissions are available at [Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the NDIS – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](https://aph.gov.au/Current-Scheme-Implementation-and-Forecasting-for-the-NDIS-Parliament-of-Australia)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Committee's inquiry. I look forward to your findings.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to be 'Pauline', with a stylized flourish at the end.

14 December 2021

**Enclosure 1:** Information on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)



## Australian Government

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## Department of Social Services

### Department of Social Services input to the Committee Chair

#### **The Commonwealth Government's responsibilities for funding, delivering and/or managing disability and NDIS care services in Queensland**

##### National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was designed to support people with permanent and significant disability, originally estimated to be up to 10 per cent of the 4.3 million Australians who have a disability. The NDIS is a world-first reform to the way disability support is provided, significantly increasing the funding available for disability services, and putting choice and control over how those services are delivered into the hands of people with disability. The August 2011 Productivity Commission Inquiry Report into Disability Care and Support identified key drivers for reform that disability services were underfunded, unfair, fragmented and inefficient with little choice and control for people with disability. The Productivity Commission's recommendation of an NDIS that should enable unified, national, long-term high quality care and support, offering certainty to people with disability, was accepted by all governments.

The aim of the NDIS is to support the independence and social and economic participation of Australians with significant and permanent disability. The NDIS recognises that services and supports for NDIS participants is a responsibility shared with states and territories, and acknowledges that NDIS participants may require contributions from other service systems.

In 2015 all governments agreed the principles to determine the responsibilities of the NDIS and other service systems, including the Applied Principles and Tables of Support (APTOS). These tables set out the responsibilities of the Commonwealth and state governments to provide a range of supports to people with disabilities, through both the NDIS and mainstream systems. The NDIS is intended to complement the vital role that mainstream service systems play in the lives of all Australians (including those with a disability). The APTOS can be viewed here: [www.dss.gov.au/the-applied-principles-and-tables-of-support-to-determine-responsibilities-ndis-and-other-service](http://www.dss.gov.au/the-applied-principles-and-tables-of-support-to-determine-responsibilities-ndis-and-other-service).

The NDIS funds disability supports that are found to be reasonable and necessary unless those supports are part of another service system's universal service obligation, or are covered by reasonable adjustment required under law dealing with discrimination on the basis of disability. In its August 2011 Inquiry Report into Disability Care and Support, the Productivity Commission highlighted the importance of this principle: 'it will be important for the NDIS not to respond to shortfalls in mainstream services by providing its own substitute services. To do so would weaken incentives for governments to properly fund mainstream services for people with

disability, shifting the cost to another part of government. This approach would undermine the sustainability of the NDIS and the capacity of people with disability to access mainstream services’.

## **How the Commonwealth Government allocates resources to these types of care, both human and financial, and the current state of those allocations**

### NDIS expenditure and participant population in Queensland

The NDIS is fully funded and demand driven. While states and territories make set contributions under full scheme agreements to meet part of the cost of supports for participants, the Commonwealth provides funds to meet the balance of those costs through an appropriation made by the Australian Parliament. The Commonwealth also funds all of the operating costs of the National Disability Insurance Agency and the costs of the Information Linkages and Capacity Building grants program. Details of funding can be found in the Portfolio Budget Statements published at the time of the Australian Government Budget and available on the Department of Social Services web site. Where there are adjustments to appropriations or forward estimates after the Budget, these are set out in Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements, also available on the department’s website.

Nationally, as at 30 September 2021, there were 484,700 active participants with approved plans in the NDIS with 54 per cent of these participants receiving support for the first time.

Of these participants, 97,000 resided in Queensland which represents about 21 per cent of active NDIS participants, noting the Queensland population is about 20 per cent of the National population (March 2021 ABS Data). Of the 97,000 participants in Queensland:

- 16 per cent were children aged under 7 years.
- 9.5 per cent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI). This number is higher than the national proportion of ATSI participants in the NDIS, which is 7 per cent.
- 58 per cent of QLD NDIS participants self-reported accessing mainstream health and wellbeing supports.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) committed \$6.8 billion in plans for NDIS participants residing Queensland which is approximately 21 per cent of the national NDIS funding commitment, of which \$4.9 billion was spent by participants. This represents an average utilisation of 72 per cent in 2020-21, comparable to national utilisation of 71 per cent in 2020-21. The average plan budget per NDIS participant residing in Queensland was \$71,800 with the average amount spent \$59,200.

The figures above are taken from the NDIS Quarterly Report which is a summary of the performance and operations of the NDIA for the past 3 months as required by the NDIS Act. Quarterly reports, include growth of the Scheme; number of participants; growth in plan spend and market metrics are published on the NDIS website. Each quarterly report includes appendices of state specific information. Queensland information is in Appendix H in each report.

### NDIS Workforce

During the 2019-20 financial year, there were around 52,300 NDIS workers in Queensland. This comprised around 3,700 allied health professionals, around 14,000 community-based support workers, around 33,000 home-based support workers and around 1,600 in other occupations.

Queensland currently has the third largest number of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) workers nationally and accounts for approximately 18 per cent of the NDIS workforce.

Department of Social Services modelling forecasts continued growth of the NDIS workforce in Queensland will be needed due to continued growth in the number of NDIS participants. The Australian Government is undertaking a range of activities to ensure there is a responsive and capable workforce to support the disability sector. These activities include strengthening entry pathways and promoting the benefits of working in the care and support sector to attract more workers; training and supporting the workforce; and encouraging the effective operation of the market including reducing red tape.

*The NDIS National Workforce Plan: 2021-2025* (the Workforce Plan), launched on 10 June 2021 by the Minister for the NDIS, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC, provides the framework for these activities. Disability support, aged care and veterans' care programs are highly connected, with over a third of providers operating across all three areas. Many of the priorities in the Workforce Plan are targeted at the NDIS workforce, including allied health, while greater alignment with the care and support sector will strengthen the overall care and support market and workforce.

### **Information on waitlists for these types of care**

The Department of Social Services does not hold information on waitlists.

The NDIA publishes a range of information on its performance each quarter. In the September 2021 quarterly report, the average number of days in Queensland for an access decision to be completed after final information has been provided is 5 days, which is the same as the national average number. The average number of days for first plans to be approved in Queensland after the access decision has been made is 54 days, which is slightly higher than national average of 51 days. The current number of access decisions completed and first plan approvals are also publically available in the NDIS September 2021 Quarterly Report.