



Supported Independent Living (SIL): What does good look like?

Public consultation to help inform a possible
'commissioning' approach for part of the SIL market

Consultation paper | August 2026

Executive summary

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the department) wants your feedback.

We are exploring whether a ‘commissioning approach’ could improve the quality, innovation and sustainability of Supported Independent Living (SIL) supports. Commissioning means the government may take a more active role in how some SIL supports are planned, funded and monitored. This could include setting clearer rules about quality, safety and outcomes.

We call this work the ‘Supported Independent Living (SIL) commissioning project’.

In the 2026-27 Budget the Government announced changes to protect the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for people with permanent and significant disability now and into the future. On 14 May 2026 the NDIS Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2026 was introduced to Parliament.

As part of these reforms, the Government is looking for ways to improve participant outcomes and ensure key NDIS supports continue to deliver high-quality and sustainable services.

From reviews, inquiries and consultations we have heard that there are opportunities to improve the quality, innovation and sustainability of SIL supports.

This paper seeks views on how ‘commissioning’ could support high-quality, safe and sustainable SIL supports for some NDIS participants receiving 24/7 supports. This includes considering how shared SIL supports can be delivered effectively, while maintaining quality, safety and participant outcomes.

Commissioning may not be suitable for the whole SIL market. We want to consider which parts of the SIL market (participants and providers) may benefit most from commissioning.

No decision has been made. We want your feedback before government considers next steps.

We want to hear from:

- people with disability, their families, carers and supporters
- disability representative organisations and advocates
- disability service providers
- health professionals and disability support workers.

This paper covers:

- background and context, including a definition of ‘commissioning’
- an overview of this consultation and other planned consultation activities
- key terms that are relevant to the consultation questions
- six consultation questions
- information on how to be involved and how to ask questions.

We recognise the SIL sector has been consulted extensively, including through work to develop SIL Practice Standards. This project will draw on those insights, as well as findings from the current Quality Supports Program SIL Pilot.

We thank you for your interest in this important work and welcome your feedback.

Background and context

Supported Independent Living (SIL) provides support to help participants live independently at home. SIL is for people with high support needs who require significant support every day. SIL can include personal care, cooking, meal preparation, cleaning, and support to build skills and independence at home. SIL supports are often delivered through a combination of individual and shared supports, where a support worker may assist more than one participant at a time.

SIL is a significant part of the NDIS. Approximately 37,000 participants receive SIL supports and government expenditure on SIL exceeds \$16 billion each year. While only a small proportion of NDIS participants receive SIL, it is one of the largest and most complex support types funded through the NDIS.

Previous reviews, inquiries and consultation activities have examined housing and living supports for people with disability. These include the Disability Royal Commission, the Independent Review of the NDIS, and other independent inquiries into supported accommodation and SIL. The Quality Supports Program SIL Pilot is also examining what drives high-quality SIL supports and their costs.

Together, these processes highlighted the importance of ensuring people with disability have access to high-quality supports that promote safety, rights, independence, choice and control. They also identified an opportunity to explore how the quality, innovation and sustainability of SIL supports could be improved.

What is ‘commissioning’?

In this project, ‘commissioning’ means government taking a more active role in shaping how services are planned, funded, delivered and monitored. This includes setting expectations for quality, safety, outcomes, provider capability and service availability and overseeing whether those expectations are met. This could be in addition to existing requirements and standards.

Commissioning could take many forms. If introduced for SIL, it may change how some participants engage a SIL provider. It may also change provider funding arrangements, service and safeguard requirements, and performance monitoring.

Commissioning does not necessarily involve direct government delivery of services. Instead, it focuses on how government can help ensure services are available, sustainable and responsive to participant needs.

What are we asking?

The Australian Government is consulting on a possible commissioning approach for part of the SIL market. Commissioning may not be suitable for all SIL supports. We want to understand which participants and providers may benefit most from a commissioning approach.

The purpose of this work is to explore whether a more active role for government could help improve participant outcomes, strengthen safeguards, encourage innovation, and address provider viability challenges in parts of the market.

The Government has not made decisions about the form, scope or implementation of any future commissioning model. This consultation is intended to inform future policy development.

This public consultation builds on previous engagement and focuses on practical views about what well-functioning SIL supports look like for positive and sustainable participant outcomes.

What we are doing

The focus of this consultation

This consultation explores how commissioning could support well-functioning SIL services and improve participant outcomes. We are interested in views from people with disability, families, advocates, providers, workers, representative organisations and governments.

Feedback will help us understand:

- which participant cohorts would be most suitable for a commissioning model
- what high-quality SIL supports look like in practice
- what types of providers could participate in a commissioning model
- how participant rights, safety and wellbeing can best be protected
- how innovation can be encouraged while maintaining quality and accountability
- how participant choice and control can be supported, including in regional, rural and remote areas
- what providers require to remain financially sustainable while delivering high-quality, safe, and innovative services.

Feedback received through this consultation will inform the next stage of policy development, including options for Government's consideration.

Overview of further consultation activities

This public consultation is one of several consultation activities planned for the second half of 2026 to inform advice to Government.

These activities will include workshops and targeted consultation with people with disability and their families, disability representative organisations, peak bodies, state and territory governments, SIL providers, and others.

The department may undertake further public consultation on any potential future SIL commissioning model.

Key terms

The following terms are included in the discussion questions:

Term	Definition
Quality	Safe, reliable and person-centred services tailored to a participant's needs, goals and daily life.
Safeguards	Actions and systems that prevent and respond to harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation while upholding rights and dignity.
Innovation	New or improved support models that improve outcomes, independence, safety or choice.
Participant choice and control	Participant ability to make informed decisions about supports, provider, home life and routines.
Provider sustainability	Provider ability to deliver safe, consistent SIL services over time with a capable workforce and viable model.
Thin markets	Places or circumstances where suitable providers, workers or housing options are limited, or places where there are few participants
Participant cohorts	Groups of people who use similar kinds of SIL supports

Consultation questions

The 6 consultation questions are outlined below, and include a question each on:

- participants
- quality
- safeguards
- innovation
- participant choice
- provider sustainability.

You do not need to answer every question. You can answer one question, some questions or all questions.

You do not need to use formal language.

There are no right or wrong answers. We want to understand what matters to you.

Please draw on your own personal experiences, either of SIL or of other programs and services that you may have experienced.

For questions 2 to 6, we are interested in practical examples of what good SIL supports look like.

Question 1 (Participants): Which SIL participants could benefit most from additional government oversight of planning, delivering and monitoring of SIL supports?

In your response, you may wish to consider:

- the nature and complexity of participants' support needs
- participants' characteristics, circumstances or goals
- geographic location and community characteristics, including rural, regional and remote areas, and First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities
- the intensity and type of SIL services received
- staffing arrangements, including shared supports and support worker-to-participant ratios at different times of the day or for different activities
- the nature of the home and living arrangements (e.g. shared homes, individual homes).

Question 2 (Quality): What do high-quality SIL supports look like?

In your response, you may wish to consider:

- what high-quality SIL supports should include
- how services should support independence and daily living
- how participant goals, needs, and preferences should be reflected in service delivery
- information participants and families need to make informed choices about supports
- how privacy, independence and individual outcomes can be supported when SIL supports are shared between participants
- how government could require high-quality services through a commissioning approach.

Question 3 (Safeguards): How should SIL supports **protect the safety, health, wellbeing and rights of participants?**

In your response, you may wish to consider:

- what safeguards are needed in SIL settings
- how risks should be identified and managed
- how participants and their support persons can raise concerns safely, and feel confident that they will be addressed
- how providers demonstrate they respect participant rights, dignity and decision-making
- what additional safeguards could be provided through a commissioning approach.

Question 4 (Innovation): How can **innovation by SIL providers **enhance the quality of SIL supports and outcomes for SIL participants?****

In your response, you may wish to consider:

- what innovation means in SIL – what does successful innovation look like
- how providers can establish better ways of delivering support
- how technology or workforce models could improve outcomes
- how commissioning could encourage providers to deliver more flexible, person-centred and effective services
- how SIL can work alongside other home and living supports (e.g. Specialist Disability Accommodation, leaving hospital, avoiding entry to Residential Aged Care)
- how government could encourage innovation through a commissioning approach.

Question 5 (Participant choice): How can **effective participant choice and control be enhanced, including in regions with smaller populations?**

In your response, you may wish to consider:

- what strong participant choice and control looks like for people receiving SIL support
 - This could include views on decisions about supports, daily routines, living arrangements, housemates, support workers and service providers
- how participant choice and control can be supported where there are fewer providers, smaller workforces or limited housing options
 - This could include views on service availability, provider diversity, culturally safe services, and how to support competition in thin markets.
- how a commissioning approach could support or limit participant choice and control.

Question 6 (Provider sustainability): What's needed to **ensure that SIL providers are sustainable?**

In your response, you may wish to consider:

- what providers need to deliver safe, reliable and high-quality services consistently and sustainably over time, and across different locations and participant cohorts
 - This could include vacancy management, workforce capability, pricing, business viability, administrative requirements, service continuity, operating in thin markets, and how to balance accountability and flexibility.
- how a commissioning approach could affect provider viability and sustainability.

How to get involved

You can get involved by.

- making a submission via the department's Consultation Hub at: <https://consultations.health.gov.au>
- submitting a video (including in Auslan)
- responding by email
- requesting a phone call

Submissions for this consultation are open from 11 August 2026 to 13 September 2026.

Questions?

Email: SILConsultation@health.gov.au

Write to:

Quality and Safeguards Policy Branch
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
GPO Box 9848