



# NDIS rules: public consultation on new framework planning

## Discussion paper

January 2026

### What we are doing

In 2024, changes were made to the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act) to make the NDIS fairer, more transparent, sustainable and person-centred. Information about how the changes will work will be outlined in new NDIS rules.

We are working with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), state and territory governments, and the disability community to develop these rules to enable a new approach to planning. This is called new framework planning.

The new planning approach will start from mid-2026 for some participants who are over the age of 16. It will be a phased introduction so many participants will not experience any change for some time. Participants will be told before anything changes for them, and support will be provided by the NDIA.

We are committed to working with people with disability over this period to ensure we get the changes right. We will do this by sharing information publicly and continuing to engage with the disability sector to hear feedback and test ideas.

### Why we are creating new framework plans

We heard from the [NDIS Review](#) that we need to improve the planning process and focus on a person's disability support needs, rather than diagnosis or functional impairment. New framework planning will need to:

- use a person-centred and strengths-based approach
- create fairer and more consistent budgets
- reduce the need for expensive reports
- result in simpler plans that are more flexible.

### Purpose of this consultation

We want to explain how the new framework planning rules will work and seek feedback from NDIS participants and the disability community.

These rules will be about:

- how a participant's disability support needs will be assessed

- how reasonable and necessary budgets will be developed
- how a participant can use their plan

Feedback from NDIS participants and the disability community will ensure new rules improve the experience of participants and help participants get the most out of their NDIS plans to live the life they choose.

## How to get involved

Please read each section of the discussion paper and think about how these rules would work for you, or people you support or represent.

Ask yourself:

- What further information would be helpful for participants?
- What might not work?
- What can we do to make it easier for people to understand?
- What would be useful in helping you to understand the changes?

You can share your feedback here: [Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing - Citizen Space](#)

We will continue to update and provide further information in response to feedback.

## Background on new framework planning rules

### Legislation, rules and operational guidelines

NDIS rules set out how the NDIS Act works in practice. The department is working with the NDIA and State and Territory governments to develop new rules for consultation with the disability community.

Rules can be further described in operational guidelines published by the NDIA and provide more detail for how the NDIS works.

Feedback from NDIS participants and the disability community will assist us in developing the rules. We will also share it with the NDIA to help develop operational guidelines.

### Changes from old framework plans to new framework plans

Old framework plans are what participants receive today. Old framework plans create a budget based on reasonable and necessary supports. This can make it difficult for participants to use their funding as their needs or circumstances change.

New framework plans will be created using a support needs assessment and a transparent budget method set out in rules. In new framework planning, participants will go through a new process that will gather information to assess their disability support needs. That information will then be used to determine a reasonable and necessary budget.

New framework plans will be gradually introduced once the new rules are in place. We are aiming to introduce changes from mid-2026.

Further details and examples are below.

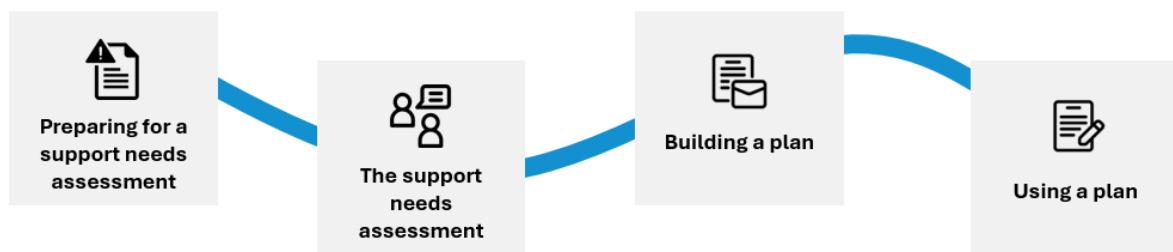
## What we have heard so far

We began sharing information about new framework planning with disability sector representatives, as part of a phased approach to consultations on new framework planning. They shared their ideas and told us what is important for developing the NDIS rules. The NDIA has also been working with co-design and advisory groups.

A summary of what we've heard can be found here: [NDIS new framework planning: what we heard summary report](#)

## New framework planning process

We will be working with the community on rules for new framework plans, but when these rules come into effect, the participant planning pathway will look like this:



This process will replace the current planning process. A person must be a participant in the NDIS and over the age of 16 before they start a new framework plan.

### Step 1: Preparing for a support needs assessment

A participant will be contacted by the NDIA to tell them they will be receiving a new framework plan. The NDIA will explain the support needs assessment process including a **Notice of Impairments** and **Notice to have a new framework plan**. Further details on these notices can be found below. Participants will continue using their current NDIS plan until they receive a new plan.

### Related rules

#### Notice of Impairments

A Notice of Impairments is a written document provided to NDIS participants by the NDIA to inform them about the category or categories of impairments for which they meet access to the Scheme.

Notice of Impairments have been provided to participants who have met access to the Scheme from 1 January 2025.

A new rule will allow the NDIA to provide a Notice of Impairments to participants who met access to the Scheme before 1 January 2025. The rule will help participants know when the NDIA can make changes to their Notice of Impairments and tell participants when they can request a variation to their Notice of Impairments.

A participant will generally receive a Notice of Impairments as part of the transition to new framework planning.

To see further details on the **notice of impairments** rules, please visit: [Explanatory document – Notice of impairments](#)

### **Notice to have a new framework plan**

This rule will help participants know when they will receive a new framework plan.

All NDIS participants must have a new framework plan within a five-year transition period as referenced in section 32C of the NDIS Act.

The new planning approach will start mid-2026 for some participants over the age of 16. Participants who will be part of the change will know well before it happens and have support from the NDIA. More details will be provided by the NDIA in the coming months.

To see further details on the **transition to new framework plans** rules, please visit: [Explanatory document – Transition to new framework plan](#)

## **Step 2: The support needs assessment**

An NDIA Assessor will meet with a participant to understand their daily life, disability support needs and preferences. Participants will have the option for their nominee, family member or advocate (if required) to attend when they complete a **support needs assessment**.

The NDIA Assessor will check the information with the participant, and their nominee, family member or advocate if in attendance, to make sure it is correct. The outcomes of the assessment will be documented in a **support needs assessment report**. This report will be sent to the NDIA delegate to make sure it is complete. The participant will get a copy of their support needs assessment report. This can be shared with a nominee, family member or advocate if needed. If a participant has any concerns about the assessment report, the NDIA delegate will work with the participant to decide whether a **replacement assessment** is needed.

### **Related rules**

#### **Support needs assessments**

The NDIS Review recommended a new support needs assessment process that is consistent, holistic and person-centred.

This process will be a new way to gather information about a participant's disability support needs. This is called the support needs assessment process. New support needs assessment rules will include:

- Support needs assessment process and relevant assessment tools (s32L(2))
- Support needs assessment report, including content and structure (s32L(6))
- Replacement needs assessment (s32L(7A))

Section 32L of the NDIS Act can be found [here](#).

The support needs assessment will consist of:

- the comprehensive support needs assessment tool (I-CAN version 6)
- a personal and environmental circumstances questionnaire
- the targeted assessment processes (for example, assessments from an allied health professional for assistive technology, home and vehicle modifications, and disability-related health supports).

The NDIA Assessor will use the support needs assessment tool to identify the participant's disability support needs. The questionnaire will help the NDIA Assessor understand the participant's circumstances and preferences.

The targeted assessment process will use information a participant may already have from their treating health professional. Where additional information may be required, funding may be provided in a participant's plan to cover any out-of-pocket costs.

There will be different assessment tools for children and adults.

### **Support needs assessment report**

This rule says what information must be in a support needs assessment report. For example, it will include:

- information about a participant's disability related support needs
- other important information gathered during the assessment.

The NDIA Assessor must prepare a support needs assessment report and give it to the NDIA delegate as soon as possible after the assessment is finished. This report will be used to inform the budget in a participant's new NDIS plan, using the method that will be set out in the NDIS Rules. The NDIA delegate will provide the participant with a copy of the report.

The NDIA is currently working with participants and the disability community to develop a draft report through a series of workshops, forums and design testing. This approach ensures lived experience is central to the design of the report.

Further consultations will be undertaken by the NDIA to ensure the report meets participants' needs, including consultation with the Participant Reference Group (PRG), Disability Representative and Carers Organisations (DRCO), the Independent Advisory Council (IAC) and other advisory groups.

## Replacement needs assessment

This rule will be about what the NDIA delegate must or must not consider when deciding if a replacement needs assessment should be completed.

### FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The University of Melbourne has partnered with the Centre for Disability Studies to provide a support needs assessment tool to the NDIA. The tool is called the Instrument for the Classification and Assessment of Support Needs (I-CAN).

The I-CAN version 6 has been refined over 20 years and is used in programs including the national Disability Support for Older Australians program.

The NDIA chose the I-CAN through a competitive procurement process and were supported by a disability lived experience expert advisory group.

## Step 3: Building a plan and plan discussion

A participant's reasonable and necessary budget will be determined by using information in the support needs assessment report, using a method set out in the new budget method rules (more information on these below).

A participant's budget will have 2 parts:

- Flexible funding – money that can be used for different supports
- Stated supports funding – money for specific supports that must be used as planned.

The majority of participant supports will be flexible.

The NDIA delegate uses the information and preferences from the support needs assessment to consider:

- how long the plan will last
- how the plan will be managed
- requirements for how funding can be used to buy or get supports
- any limits on how flexible funding can be spent.

The NDIA delegate then checks the plan, including the budget, and approves it.

## Related rules

### Method for calculating total funding amount for flexible and stated supports funding

To work out how much funding a person needs, the NDIA will use the information gathered during the support needs assessment and a set of calculations outlined in the budget method rules.

The budget method rules will be technical as they will cover:

- the steps the NDIA will apply when working out total funding amounts for flexible and stated supports funding, including how informal supports available to a participant are reflected, and
- a set of calculations to determine total funding amounts and any adjustments required. Examples of adjustments include remoteness loadings or compensation payments.

The NDIA delegate will review the budget as part of approving a participant's plan.

The budget method rules will clearly outline how the NDIA works out a participant's funding.

More information on the budget method steps will be published to support this consultation process.

### Flexible funding

Examples of the types of flexible funding includes:

- Assistive technology – general
- Consumable products
- Disability-related nursing supports
- Employment supports
- General allied health supports
- In-home and community supports
- Interpreting and translation supports
- Physical and allied health related supports
- Social allied health supports
- Specialist driver training

### Stated supports funding

Funding for stated supports can only be spent on the stated support in a participant's plan. Examples of the types of stated supports funding includes:

- Assistance animals
- Assistive technology assets
- Behaviour support
- Home modifications
- In-kind supports
- Medium term accommodation

- Periodic private vehicle transfer
- Plan Management
- Residential Aged Care
- Short term respite
- Specialist disability accommodation
- Support Coordination

Some of these supports may need external quotes before funding is released for purchase.

To see further details on **stated supports** rules, please visit: [Explanatory document – Stated supports](#)

### **Restrictions on flexible funding**

Funding is designed to be flexible so participants can use it for a wide range of NDIS supports. However, there are some exceptions.

Restrictions may be used to ensure funds are available for important supports throughout the duration of the plan. Restrictions may be used if:

- the participant could experience physical, mental or financial harm without the restriction
- the participant cannot manage their funding set out in their plan, such as situations where the participant is at risk of financial exploitation or fraud.

For example, a restriction may be placed on a portion of flexible funding to be used for therapy supports to obtain an assessment for an assistive technology item the participant has been assessed as needing. Participants can also request their funding be restricted, so they set aside a flexible support to be available later in the plan.

### **Requirements for receiving a service or buying supports**

In some cases, the NDIA will set conditions for funding. This means a participant must meet certain requirements to access funds.

For example, conditions may apply when:

- a quote is required before the service or support can start
- support must be provided by an appropriately qualified provider/professional (of a participant's choosing) for example, when home modifications or specialist mobility equipment is required
- a specified process has to be followed.

### **Funding periods**

Funding periods are applied to the flexible and stated budgets for new framework plans like they are currently. Some NDIS supports will not have funding periods. For example, one-off purchases.

To see further details on **new framework plan spending** rules, please visit: [Explanatory document – New framework plan spending rules](#)

### What appeal rights does a participant have if they are not happy with a plan?

A participant can seek an internal (NDIA) review or external review by the Administrative Review Tribunal of all aspects of the statement of supports in their plan. This might include whether their reasonable and necessary budget was developed in accordance with relevant rules and decisions about plan management and funding periods.

As the needs assessment is the basis for determining the reasonable and necessary budget in accordance with the method set out in the rules, a participant can ask for a replacement needs assessment as part of their review request.

To see further details on **reviews and appeals under new framework planning**, please visit: [Factsheet – Reviews and appeals under the new way of planning](#)

## Step 4: Starting to use a plan

Participants can have an **implementation meeting** with an NDIA delegate to:

- understand their new budget and requirements
- connect with providers.

Regular check-ins can also be made to support a participant move to their new plan.

## Related rules

### Plan variations

The rules help participants know when the NDIA can vary a participant's plan without needing to complete a new needs assessment. The rule will set out circumstances when this can occur, for example:

- providing emergency or crisis funding due to significant change in support needs for a short period of time.
- adding funding for repairs, replacement or maintenance of Assistive Technology
- changes to a participant's employment supports due to minor changes to participant work hours
- changes in aged care needs for younger people in residential aged care.

### NDIS supports

The NDIS supports rules makes it clear what types of supports and services NDIS funding can be used for. The NDIS supports rule was created to be clearer about what supports participants can spend their NDIS funds on.

A list of the current NDIS supports list is available on the NDIS website: [Our Guidelines | NDIS](#).

**INFORMATION ONLY**

**NDIS supports:** public consultation on NDIS supports was conducted in 2025. For further information please see: [NDIS supports rules – engage.dss.gov.au](https://engage.dss.gov.au). We will be asking for feedback on the next phase of NDIS supports rules soon. Keep up to date with consultations by visiting: [Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing - Citizen Space](https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/disability-and-ageing/citizen-space)

## Glossary

Term	Definition
Budget method	The calculation used to generate the amount of funding each participant receives in their budget.
Flexible funding	Flexible funding may be used by participants for NDIS supports that are not stated supports. Examples may include, employment supports, transport – specialist driver training, consumables, therapy, in-home and community supports.
Funding periods	The period of time within the total plan duration a participant has to spend the funding they receive in their budget.
Legislation	A law or set of laws suggested by a government and made official by a parliament.
NDIA Assessor	A person who undertakes a support needs assessment or replacement assessment on behalf of the NDIA for the purposes of section 32L of the Act.
NDIA delegate	An NDIA employee who works with participants to create an NDIS plan. A delegate of the CEO and can make funding decisions under the NDIS Act.
New framework plans	An NDIS plan developed using the new supports needs assessment.
NDIS rules	The <a href="#">NDIS rules</a> are legislative instruments made under the NDIS Act. NDIS rules set out how the NDIS Act works in practice.
Notice	A document that shares information with a participant about their NDIS participant status. For example, a Notice of Impairment or a Notice to have a New Framework Plan.
Old framework plans	NDIS plans developed using the current planning approach.
Operational guidelines	Information based on the NDIS legislation and rules that explain what the NDIA needs to consider and how it makes decisions.
Support needs assessment	An assessment process that will be used by the NDIA to better understand a participant's support needs in the future and develop their budget.
Stated supports	A type of support where funding can only be spent on the specific supports identified. Examples may include, short-term respite, in-kind supports, assistive technology, specialist disability accommodation, home modifications, private vehicle transport, behaviour supports, medium-term accommodation, support coordination, plan management, residential aged care.
Total funding amounts	In new framework plans, it is the total amount of funds in a budget over the length of a participant's plan.