



National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will provide people with significant and permanent disability the ability to choose services and supports to facilitate their access to, and participation in community, education and employment opportunities.

The introduction and management of the NDIS is being implemented by The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) a federal agency under the auspices of the Department of Social Services

The NDIS has commenced as of July 2013 with 'launch sites' in individual states prioritising various consumer demographic as follows:

- Tasmania for young people aged 15-24,
- South Australia for children aged 0-14,
- Barwon region of Victoria for people aged up to 65 years of age, and
- Hunter region of NSW for people up to age 65.

The four initial launch sites in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania are projected to benefit around 26,000 people over the 3 year trial.

The NDIS will commence across the ACT and the Barkly region of Northern Territory in July 2014. Transition to full scheme in states and territories with launch sites, plus Queensland and Western Australia, is currently expected to commence progressively from July 2016.

Who will be eligible for funding under the NDIS?

The eligibility of people who are blind or vision impaired will be determined by The National Disability Insurance Agency through an assessment of the level of functional impact of the person's disability.

You may meet the disability requirements if you have a **permanent impairment** and you cannot join in activities or do things without:

- mobility aids (such as a long cane or guide dog);
- training (such as independent living skills);
- assistive technology (such as computers or magnification);
- equipment (other than commonly used items such as glasses);
- home modifications; or
- if you usually require help from other people to join in or do things.

Only people who acquire their disability and require some level of support before the age of 65 will be able to access services and funding under the NDIS.

It is important to ensure that if you are under 65 and may need some services, including early intervention services, that you contact the NDIA as soon as possible for an assessment.

There is uncertainty as to how many clients of Guide Dogs Australia organisations will benefit during the launch, and from the NDIS in general, however it is currently estimated that than 25% of existing clients will be eligible for services through the NDIS during this trial period.

Focus is currently being given to transitioning clients who currently receive State or Commonwealth funded services.

Clients who are currently unfunded, which is most clients of Guide Dogs Australia organisations, will need to apply through the 'My Access Checker' (available on the NDIS website) and undertake an assessment with The Agency and their planners to determine eligibility.

Allocation of priority for eligible participants who qualify for the NDIS and the approximate numbers of clients to be included each year in each location is directed by formal agreements between the Commonwealth and individual states.

To find out more information on your individual circumstances and eligibility, visit the NDIS website www.ndis.gov.au or call the information line on 1800 800 110.

Guide Dogs Australia organisations and the NDIS

Guide Dogs Australia organisations have campaigned strongly for the inclusion of people who are blind or vision impaired in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Following a nationwide campaign "A Vision for All", which included a petition signed by over 20,000 clients and supporters, Guide Dogs Australia organisations have continued to engage with sector peak organisations, State and Federal Members of Parliament, senior departmental staff, and internal and external stakeholders to ensure our clients' needs are recognised and supported.

Guide Dogs Australia organisations in the four launch sites have all been approved as registered service providers under the NDIS.

People who are blind or visually impaired who are assessed as eligible to receive funding under the NDIS and choose to access services from Guide Dogs Australia organisations in their respective state may be able claim funding for Guide Dogs to provide the following services:

- Specialised assessment of skills, abilities, and needs.
- Assistive equipment for general tasks and demands.
- Assistive equipment for education and employment purposes
- Assistive equipment for recreation and leisure
- Provision and training in use of personal mobility equipment
- Assistance with travel / transport arrangements through orientation and mobility training
- Assistive products for household tasks.
- Assistive technology specialist assessment, set up and training.
- Training for independence in travel and transport.
- Communication and information equipment.
- Assistance in coordinating or managing life stages, transitions and supports
- Assistance to access and maintain employment
- Assistance to integrate into school or other educational program
- Assistance with daily tasks in a group or shared living arrangement
- Development of daily living and life skills
- Early intervention supports for early childhood
- Participation in community, social and civic activities
- Therapeutic supports

Guide Dogs Australia organisations are ready to provide services under the NDIS as their respective states are included in the launch and roll out of the NDIS.

Victoria

Guide Dogs Victoria is an approved service provider under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Victorian launch site for the NDIS commenced on 1 July 2013 in the Barwon region, which is also the site of the national NDIS headquarters.

The Victorian launch will take in the Local Government Areas of:

- City of Greater Geelong,
- Colac-Otway Shire,
- Borough of Queenscliffe, and
- Surf Coast Shire.

By July 2016, all Barwon area residents aged up to 65 years with significant and permanent disability that has a functional impact will progressively be able to access the scheme if they are determined to be eligible. It is expected that this will include around 5,000 people.

The National Disability Insurance Agency predicts that between July and December 2013, 1,825 existing (currently State / Commonwealth funded clients) and 152 new clients will be able to access support under the NDIS. A further 2,051 existing (currently State / Commonwealth funded clients) and 48 new clients will be eligible to access the scheme between January and July 2014.

For more information on how Guide Dogs Victoria is working with the NDIS, please visit their website at <https://www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au/> or phone 03 9854 4444.

New South Wales

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT is an approved service provider under the NDIS.

The NSW launch site for the NDIS commenced on 1 July 2013 in the Hunter region and takes in the Local Government Areas of:

- Newcastle,
- Lake Macquarie, and
- Maitland.

The launch site will include people aged up to 65 years who have been diagnosed with a permanent and severe disability with significant impacts on their functional ability.

Eligible Newcastle residents will be able to apply for access in 2013, with eligible people living in the Lake Macquarie LGA entering the scheme from 2014. Eligible people living in the Maitland LGA will access the scheme from mid-2015.

The NDIA predicts that between July and December 2013, 942 existing (currently State / Commonwealth funded clients) and 165 new clients will be able to access support under the NDIS. A further 1,542 existing (currently State / Commonwealth funded clients) and 162 new clients will be eligible to access the scheme between January and July 2014.

For more information on how Guide Dogs NSW is working with the NDIS, please visit their website at <http://www.guidedogs.com.au/> or phone 02 9412 9300

Tasmania

Guide Dogs Tasmania is an approved service provider under the NDIS.

The Tasmanian launch site for the NDIS commenced on 1 July 2013 and covers the entire State for the age cohort of 15 - 24 years.

The first stage of the scheme in Tasmania will include approximately 950 young people with significant and permanent disability.

Within this age range, priority will be given to students with a disability leaving school in 2013; young people seeking an individual support package and/or community access package; and young people transitioning from state care.

From January 2014, students aged between 15-17 years will be able to access the scheme.

The NDIA predicts that between July and December 2013, 387 people will be able to access support under the NDIS. A further 405 people be eligible to access the scheme between January and July 2014.

For more information on how Guide Dogs Tasmania is working with the NDIS, please visit their website at www.guidedogstas.com.au or phone 03 6232 1222.

South Australia

Guide Dogs SA/NT is an approved service provider under the NDIS.

The South Australia launch site for the NDIS commenced on 1 July 2013 and covers the entire State for the age cohort of 0 – 14 years.

The first year of the launch will focus on children aged under 6 years with significant and permanent disability or who would benefit from early intervention, with children aged from birth to two years being the first group to access the scheme.

Children aged five years on 1 July 2013 will enter the scheme before July 2014 with the age limit extended to 13 years from July 2014.

By 2015, all children up to 14 years with a permanent and significant disability who qualify under the NDIS will be accessing services under the scheme.

The NDIS has projected that between July and December 2013, 639 existing (current State / Commonwealth funded clients) and 42 new clients participating within the launch. Between January and July 2014 it is expected that 837 existing (current State / Commonwealth funded clients) and 47 new clients will be participating.

By 2016, a total of around 5,000 children with significant and permanent disability are expected to benefit from the first stage of the scheme.

For more information on how Guide Dogs SA/NT is working with the NDIS, please visit their website at <http://www.guidedogs.org.au/> or phone 08 8203 8333.

Australian Capital Territory

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT is an approved service provider under the NDIS.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT is currently preparing for the launch of the first stage of the NDIS in the ACT from July 2014.

It is expected that around 5,500 people with a significant and permanent disability in the ACT will be covered by the scheme when it is rolled out to all eligible residents.

The NDIS has advised there will be a gradual intake to ensure that scheme participants are properly supported and receive the right services for their individual needs.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT will provide an update on the progress towards the ACT launch site early in 2014.

Northern Territory

Guide Dogs NT is an approved service provider under the NDIS.

A pilot scheme for remote residents commenced in Tennant Creek on 1 July 2013 with the NDIS not fully rolled out across the Territory until 2019-2020.

It is projected that 7,000 Territory residents with disabilities would benefit when scheme was fully funded by 2019-2020.

Guide Dogs NT will work closely with clients in the Northern Territory as the NDIS is implemented.

For more information on how Guide Dogs SA/NT is working with the NDIS, please visit their website at <http://www.guidedogs.org.au/> or phone 08 8203 8333.

Queensland

Guide Dogs Queensland is working closely with the National Disability Insurance Agency in preparation for the planned roll out of the NDIS from July 2016.

It is anticipated that eligible Queensland residents will be covered by July 2020 with an estimated 27,000 Queenslanders with significant and permanent disabilities receiving services under the NDIS.

Guide Dogs Queensland is working with the NDIS and will provide updates on their website at <http://www.guidedogsqld.com.au/> as more detail becomes available.

Western Australia

Western Australia is a recent signatory to the NDIS.

It is anticipated that launch sites will commence from 2014 and will be split into 2 trials to determine the most appropriate system for WA residents.

One trial site will be a continuation of the 'My Way' program in WA that allows people with a disability to select the services they want from mostly not-for-profit organisations. The trial site for My Way is proposed to be in the South West region and the Kwinana-Cockburn area.

The Commonwealth's NDIS system would be conducted in Midland, the Perth Hills area and adjoining suburbs.

The Association for the Blind (Guide Dogs WA) is working closely with the NDIS and will provide updates on their website at <http://www.guidedogswa.com.au/> as more detail becomes available.