

# **Your NDIS client information booklet**

Helping you understand the National Disability  
Insurance Scheme and how it can best support you.

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# Understanding the NDIS

## What is the NDIS?

The NDIS, or National Disability Insurance Scheme, provides funding for disability support and services to Australians with permanent and significant disabilities.

Through the NDIS, you will receive a personalised plan tailored to your needs and goals with the supports and services to help you achieve them. The NDIS can fund:

- Special equipment, including assistive technology, magnifiers, or a Seeing Eye Dog.
- Home modifications, like improving the lighting around your home.
- Support from individuals like a mobility specialist to assist with improving your navigation skills.

Additionally, the NDIS can also help cover therapy, assist you with finding a job, support you in moving out of home, connect you to recreational activities like blind sport or social groups, and cover transport costs such as taxis or ride shares.

The scheme is designed to give you greater control over the things that matter most to you. The NDIS is administered by a government agency known as the National Disability Agency (NDIA).

## Am I eligible for the NDIS?

You may be eligible for the NDIS if you have a permanent disability that significantly impacts your ability to participate in everyday activities.

To qualify, you need to be under the age of 65 when you join the scheme and be an Australian citizen, hold a permanent visa or a Protected Special Category Visa.

The NDIS will continue with you past the age of 65. For those over 65 who do not receive any NDIS funding, there is disability support available via My Aged Care.

## **Is the NDIS right for me?**

The NDIS is focused on you and your needs. It helps you envision the life you want to live and gives you the flexibility to choose the support you need to make it a reality.

You're in control, with the ability to create a personalised plan that includes the support and services that suit you best.

## **What if I'm already receiving services?**

You can keep accessing services while you're in the process of joining the NDIS.

An NDIA representative will reach out to discuss your transition to the NDIS and your ongoing support needs.

## **What if I'm not currently accessing a disability service?**

You can still join the NDIS even if you are not currently accessing a disability service.

If you are not using a service, you can contact the NDIA directly to start the process and begin your application. From here, they can support you with gathering the necessary evidence and information you need to be successful.

## **How does the NDIS support someone who is blind or has low vision?**

Specialist support is available for people who are blind or have low vision, including those experiencing vision loss for the first time.

The NDIS can offer the financial support you need to access the services and supports that will help you live your life in the way that works best for you.

# The NDIS process

## Step 1:

### Contact the NDIA to confirm your eligibility

To access the NDIS, you'll need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Have a permanent disability that significantly affects your ability to take part in everyday activities.
- Be under 65 years of age when you first enter the NDIS.
- Be an Australian citizen or hold a permanent visa or a Protected Special Category Visa.

To determine your eligibility for NDIS funding, contact the NDIS directly. They'll guide you through the process and help assess your eligibility. You can call them on 1800 800 110 or visit their official website at [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au) for more information.

Once eligibility is confirmed, an NDIS partner will be assigned to you. For those over nine years old this will be a Local Area Coordinator, and for those under nine an Early Childhood Partner. This person will be known as your 'my NDIS contact.'

Your NDIS contact will guide you through the application process, helping you gather evidence about your vision loss and submit your application to the NDIA.

You will also need to provide evidence from your ophthalmologist, detailing your eye condition, its duration, and its impact on your daily life.

## Step 2:

### Have a Community Connections meeting with your NDIS contact

Your NDIS contact will arrange a Community Connections meeting with you to understand your unique needs, goals, and the supports available to you through community and mainstream services. From this meeting, a Community Connections Plan will be developed, which is an important step toward accessing NDIS funding.

Once your NDIS contact submits all the necessary information and evidence to the NDIA through this plan, the NDIA will review your application and notify you of your funding eligibility within 21 days.

## Step 3:

### The creation of your NDIS plan

If you're eligible to become an NDIS participant, the NDIA will use the information and evidence from your Community Connections Plan to create your NDIS plan. Then, the NDIA will schedule a plan meeting with you to discuss the supports and budget outlined in your plan, ensuring they align with your needs and goals, and are suitable for your vision loss.

Additional documents to bring along with you to your plan meeting are:

- completed NDIS Planning Guide and any relevant materials
- previous therapy or specialist assessments
- letters from your doctor or therapist outlining your needs
- schedules or diary entries for day programs or community activities
- anything else that captures what you're currently involved in and what you hope to one day achieve.

## Step 4:

### Attend your NDIA plan meeting

During this meeting, your NDIA planner will make sure you have a good understanding of how the NDIS can help you. The meeting can be held either virtually or in-person.

They will discuss with you:

- the supports included in your plan and why they were chosen
- your budget
- your goals and daily living activities
- how to manage your plan
- recording your providers on your plan
- consent for providers to view your plan
- using the My NDIS portal and app.

Together, you'll create a personalised plan tailored to your lifestyle. It will be an open conversation where your NDIA planner will work with you to answer your questions and explain the decisions that have been made, giving you room to agree or disagree with their choices.

Once this process is complete, the NDIA planner will finalise and share the final plan with you, which will be added to both your NDIS portal and app, ensuring you always have access to it.

We understand this whole process can feel overwhelming, so remember that you are able to take a support person of your choice along with you to this meeting.

## Step 5:

### Plan implementation meeting and check-ins

Once your NDIS plan is approved, you'll receive the finalised version in your preferred format.

Your NDIS contact will then reach out to walk you through the details of your plan. If your plan includes support coordination funding, your Support Coordinator will assist you in navigating the plan, connecting you with your listed providers and ensuring your supports are in place.

They will also explain key aspects of your plan, such as giving consent, managing your plan and budgeting.

You can also request to be connected with any NDIS registered provider, including Vision Australia, or feel free to reach out to us directly to explore how we can support you.

Each year, your NDIS contact will check in to ensure your plan is still meeting your needs and that you're maximising your funding in the best way.

For more details on the NDIS participant process, you can visit the NDIS website at <https://improvements.ndis.gov.au/participants/participant-journey>.

## Frequently asked questions

### What's the difference between the NDIS and the NDIA, and why is the NDIS called an insurance scheme?

The NDIA is the organisation that manages and implements the NDIS.

The NDIS is called an insurance scheme because it's funded collectively by Australians to support people born with or who acquire a disability.

This approach aims to improve whole-of-life outcomes by building skills, capacity, and, most importantly, independence.

### What support is available for someone who is blind or has low vision

The support provided by the NDIS is designed to help you connect with your community, find employment, and live an everyday life. This support must be related to your disability and help you achieve your goals. It covers things like travel (for work, school, or community access), support at home (such as gardening or cooking), and improving daily living activities.

Examples of support include orientation and mobility training, occupational therapy, and access to assistive technology like magnifiers, mobility canes, or CCTV.

### How do people access the NDIS?

Visit the NDIS website and complete the [Access Checklist](#) to help determine your eligibility. Once you've reviewed the checklist and confirmed your eligibility, contact the NDIS directly at 1800 800 110 or simply go online to request an [Access Request Form](#).

Take some time to think and prepare. You can use the Vision Australia '[Your NDIS Planning Guide](#)' to help. Be sure to consider your goals, what you want to achieve, and the kind of life you want to lead.



## What is an NDIS plan?

An NDIS plan outlines the individual support services available to a you. It's created based on the outcomes of your plan meeting and should reflect your outlined goals and the support you need to achieve them.

Once the planning process is complete, you'll receive your NDIS plan, which details the support and funding available to you for the duration of the plan. You can use this funding to purchase services directly, or through the support service you choose.

## With the individual NDIS planning process, what is goal setting and why is it important?

Once you've completed your Access Request Form, a meeting will be scheduled with a planner from the NDIA. You can request this meeting to be in person or by phone. During the plan meeting, you will discuss the support you currently receive, your goals, and the support you need to achieve them.

Goal setting is crucial as it will shape the types of support included in your plan. For example, if your goal is to travel independently, the planner will help identify the support you need like funding for transport, orientation and mobility training, and assistive technology to help you navigate the community.

Remember that every NDIS plan is unique, even if goals are similar. From the very beginning, it has been tailored to you.

# Vision Australia services

Vision Australia offers services, advice, and assistive technology to help people who are blind or have low vision access and fully participate in the aspects of life they choose to. These supports fall under “Improved Daily Living” in your NDIS plan, so be sure to look for this category.



## Orthoptics

- To assess your level of vision loss.
- Receive tailored recommendations for equipment and strategies to enhance your vision, and trial them see what works best for you.



## Occupational therapy and equipment

- Assist you in developing new skills to enhance your daily living activities.
- Help you to access a wide range of support to help you become safer and more independent.



## Orientation and mobility training and equipment

- Support to access equipment that enhances your independence.
- Get training to stay mobile, safe, and confident in your community.



## Assistive technology and training

- Explore different technologies that can support everyday tasks, like reading, using computers, and managing phone calls.
- Receive personalised recommendations on specialised vision equipment, with the opportunity to try it out before purchasing.



## Paediatric support

- Access to support for children with vision loss, including services like speech pathology, sensory integration, motor skills development and language support.
- Programs to help build life and social skills, with regular school holiday activities.

# NDIS client success stories

## Kim

Kim was among the first of our clients to access the NDIS.

New to the area, her initial support focused on orientation, mobility, and public transport training. Vision Australia helped her build independence at home by improving room lighting, adding tactile signage, and helping with kitchen tasks and daily living tasks.

Kim also developed new computer skills, enhancing her work readiness and enabling her to assist her daughter with her homework. With her positive attitude, Kim has since volunteered in administration at both Vision Australia and at Barwon Health, and recently applied to volunteer with St. John Ambulance Australia.

## Rhiannon

Vision Australia worked with Rhiannon and her family to help fulfil her NDIS goals around independence at school.

We supplied her with the latest portable magnifier of the time, training her to ensure she gets the most out of it at school. She also received assistance to use scissors and write on her own.

Now 13 years old, Rhiannon is gaining confidence with the help of Vision Australia's orientation and mobility training. We recently provided her with a new rainbow-colored cane, adding a touch of fun as she learns to navigate places like the supermarket and carparks independently.

The sky is the limit for Rhiannon and her positive attitude.

# Contact us

Find out more about how our services and support can help you and your family today.

Vision Australia has metro and regional centres around Australia.

**Call us on 1300 84 74 66**

You can also visit our website at [www.visionaustralia.org](http://www.visionaustralia.org) or email us at [info@visionaustralia.org](mailto:info@visionaustralia.org) to find out the centre closest to you.



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