



The National Disability Insurance Scheme

What does it mean for clients in the Hearing Services Program?

In 2013, it was agreed that the Hearing Services Program would be in-scope of the NDIS, along with a number of other existing Commonwealth programmes that support people with a disability.

This means that clients in the Hearing Services Program, who are less than age 65 and eligible for the NDIS, will transition to the NDIS by 2019-20 (when the scheme reaches full roll out). The NDIS supports people with a permanent and significant disability to have more choice and control over their services.

Eligible clients who live in NDIS trial sites can become NDIS participants now and may be able to access other supports, in addition to those available through the Hearing Services Program, where reasonable and necessary. NDIS participants are not required to pay any out of pocket costs for the supports and services included in their individual plan.

Existing clients of the Hearing Services Program who are not eligible to transition will still receive hearing services, for as long as they remain eligible and require services. More than 600,000 elderly clients will continue to receive hearing services under the Hearing Services Program each year.

By 2019-20, registered NDIS service providers will compete to deliver hearing services, including Australian Hearing. NDIS clients are able to make decisions about their supports, including who will provide them.

A fact sheet with further details has been published on the Office of Hearing services website: (www.hearingservices.gov.au)

Timing of national roll out

The NDIS is currently being trialed in all states and territories, except Queensland, and will continue rolling out to full national coverage.

The roll out process will be completed in the Australian Capital Territory by the end of 2016.

New South Wales and South Australia will reach full coverage by 1 July 2018 and Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and Northern Territory will roll out by 1 July 2019.

In Western Australia (WA) the comparative trial of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and MyWay models will inform work on the future roll out of the NDIS in WA.

Accessing the NDIS

You may be eligible for NDIS support if you are aged less than 65 years and have a permanent hearing loss that substantially reduces your ability to participate effectively in activities without some type of support or assistance.

Younger children with hearing loss may also be eligible under the Early Intervention requirements.

Clients of the Hearing Services Program in NDIS trial sites are encouraged to contact their closest NDIA office to determine whether they meet the access requirements.

People who become participants in the NDIS will not be any worse off than if they had remained in the Hearing Services Program (i.e. there is no disadvantage).

Protecting quality and safeguarding clients

States/territories and the Commonwealth are developing a national framework for providers to safeguard participants and ensure the quality of the services delivered. This framework will consider appropriate quality checks for hearing practitioners, including experience and qualifications. These checks will be informed by the existing arrangements under the Hearing Services Program.

Important issues such as preserving newborn referral pathways, protecting clinical standards of hearing care and ensuring that hearing practitioners have the necessary skills and experience to provide services will all be addressed as part of transition planning. Stakeholder groups will be invited to participate in the transition planning process and will be kept informed of progress.

Key Messages

- By 2019-20 Hearing Services Program clients who are eligible for NDIS will transfer to that scheme.
- The Hearing Services Program will continue to provide services to eligible clients who are not NDIS participants.
- CSO clients who transfer will be able to choose to remain with Australian Hearing as their service provider.
- Australian Hearing will compete for NDIS and Hearing Services Program clients.
- Hearing Services Program clients under age 65, fitted or implanted with a hearing device(s) and living in an NDIS trial site, should contact an NDIA planner to determine their eligibility for the NDIS.
- There are a range of issues which will be worked through with stakeholders prior to transition to ensure ongoing access to high quality hearing services.

NDIS services are designed to support an individual's needs, goals and objectives to:

- enhance independence;
- increase social and economic participation; and
- develop individual's capacity to actively take part in the community.

For further information on NDIS trial sites and to check your eligibility visit the NDIS website

ndis.gov.au

or contact the NDIA on 1800 800 110

or TTY 1800 555 677