**Introduction**

Good morning / afternoon. My name is …….. and I am delighted to be here today as an NDIS Champion to talk to you about the exciting changes to disability supports called the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The NDIS Champions program is part of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) Disability Loop project. AFDO NDIS Champions are people with disability who have received training and resources to enable us to speak with confidence and authority about the National Disability Insurance Scheme in our local communities all over Australia.

Thank you for the invitation to speak today, and I hope that I can shed some light on this very exciting change that has the power to transform the lives of Australians with disability.

**Acknowledgement of Country**

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are gathered and pay my respects to their Elders both past and present.

**An overview of the NDIS**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (also called the NDIS) is the completely new way of disability support. The NDIS will provide all Australians under the age of 65 who have a permanent and significant disability with the reasonable and necessary supports they need to enjoy an ordinary life.

The NDIS supports people with disability to build skills and capability so they can participate in the community and employment.

As an insurance scheme, the NDIS takes a lifetime approach, investing in people early to improve their outcomes later in life.

The NDIS also provides people with disability, their families and carers with information and referrals to existing support services in the community.

By 2019, the NDIS will support about 460,000 Australians with disability.

**Who can access the NDIS?**

People with disability who are approved to apply for support through the NDIS are called NDIS Participants. The NDIS funds supports that are reasonable and necessary for Participants to achieve their goals and live an ordinary life.

You can access the NDIS depending on your age, residency and disability

Age: If you are under 65 years of age

Residency: If you live in Australia and are an Australian citizen, or you have paperwork that gives you permission to live here permanently

Disability: If your disability is likely to be with you for life and substantially impacts how you manage everyday activities. This means you need help from other people or special equipment to do certain things.

Early intervention: Early intervention helps people with a disability that is likely to with them for life but could be improved by getting some additional support straight away. The focus of early intervention is on people getting services and supports now so that they require fewer services and supports in the future and can live a more independent life. Early intervention can also help children under six years old with developmental delay.

The process of applying to become an NDIS Participant is called ‘Accessing’ the NDIS or NDIS Access.

**What about people who do not meet the access requirements?**

A person does not have to be an NDIS Participant to receive support from the NDIS. The NDIS will connect people with disability, their families and carers, including people who are not NDIS Participants, to disability and mainstream supports in their community.

**What if I am not happy with the access decision?**

If the NDIS determines that a person does not meet the NDIA access criteria, they must inform the person within 21 days that they are not eligible for the NDIS. The person with disability may then make an application for a formal review of the decision.

**When will the NDIS be available?**

From July 2013 the NDIS began in a number of places called trial sites around Australia.

The NDIS is now being introduced in stages around Australia. People will enter the NDIS at different times depending on where they live, how old they are and the type of support they currently receive. In some states and territories, the NDIS will be rolled out by local government area while in others people will enter by age groups. Because the NDIS is such a big change, it needs to grow in stages to make sure that it is successful and sustainable. The existing supports that people with disability have will remain in place until the NDIS is available in your area.

**Why do we need the NDIS?**

People with disability have the same right as other Australians to determine their best interests and to have choice and control over their lives.

The NDIS recognises that everyone’s needs and goals are different. The NDIS provides people with individualised support and the flexibility to manage their supports to help them achieve their goals and enjoy an ordinary life.

The NDIS replaces a disability system that was unfair and inefficient with a new national system that is world leading, equitable and sustainable.

This provides certainty and consistency for people with disability, their families and carers.

Australians will now have peace of mind that if their loved one is born with or acquires a significant disability they will get the support they need, when they need it.

**Why an insurance scheme?**

The NDIS is social insurance, not welfare. As an insurance scheme, the NDIS takes a lifetime approach to support, investing in people early to improve their outcomes later in life.

890 WORDS (9-10 mins)

A bit more detail on the NDIS

**More about NDIS Access**

More than 4 million Australians are affected by disability or chronic illness in some way. However, not everyone will be able to receive individualised support from the NDIS. It is expected that around 460,000 people will be accessing support from the NDIS by the end of 2019. This is because the NDIS aims to support people who need the most assistance. The NDIS says these people are those who have a significant and permanent disability and who need help with every day activities.

The NDIS looks at what supports a person with disability needs, and not the health effects of their disability or illness. The NDIS also talks about the importance of people being able to live an ‘ordinary life’. An ordinary life means people with disability are given the same opportunities as others in the community, something which was almost impossible to achieve before the NDIS.

People with disability who currently get supports from state or territory government programs will be contacted directly by the NDIS, who should already have most of their relevant information.

The NDIS has already started to replace many of these national, state, territory, and local government disability support systems. The NDIS will keep replacing these existing disability support systems until late 2019. This is when the NDIS is expected to be available throughout nearly all of Australia.

However, the NDIS will also support all people with disability make connections. NDIS workers called Local Area Coordinators will provide information and support and link people in with appropriate disability and mainstream supports. A part of the NDIS called Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC for short) will provide funding to lots of organisations to help with these connections.

**More about NDIS availability**

The NDIS started in 2013 as a trial in four parts of Australia and has grown slowly since then. In July 2016 the NDIS started to grow much more quickly so that it will be available to all Australians by mid 2019.

Although the NDIS will be the same everywhere, the roll out of the NDIS is happening in slightly different ways in different states and territories of Australia. In most parts of Australia, people will access the NDIS at different times based on where they live. However, in Tasmania and South Australia, the NDIS will become available at different times to people in different age groups. For example, in Tasmania the NDIS will be available from 1 July 2016 for children aged 12 to 14. Then, from 1 January 2017, the NDIS will be available for adults, aged 25 to 28. This is called the transition to full scheme.

In Western Australia it is not yet clear how the NDIS will operate as the WA State Government is also evaluating its own disability support system called ‘My Way’.

It is best to look at the NDIS website for all the detailed information on the transition to full scheme to find out when you or your loved one will be able to apple to become an NDIS Participant.

**More about formal reviews of NDIS decisions**

If a person with disability thinks that a decision made by the National Disability Insurance Agency is wrong, they may submit an application for a ‘review of a reviewable decision’, which means that the NDIA must undertake an internal review process.

Many decisions made by the NDIA are reviewable, including things like being accepted as a participant, the provision of reasonable and necessary supports, and becoming a registered provider of supports.

When you are told about an NDIA decision, you will be told how to request an internal review. A request for internal review of a decision must be made within three months of receiving notice of the decision from the NDIA.

The staff member who works on the internal review will not have been involved in the earlier decision. They may want to talk to you directly as part of this process:

The NDIA internal review staff member makes a decision to confirm, vary or set aside earlier decision

The NDIS participant is notified of decision

If the NDIS participant remains dissatisfied with the decision, an application for review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) is lodged – this must be done within 28 days

If you are still not happy after the internal review of the decision, you can apply for a review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), a tribunal that exists outside the NDIA.

You cannot ask the AAT to review a decision by the NDIA until the decision has been internally reviewed by the NDIA.

For information about applying for a review by the AAT, see the AAT website: [www.aat.gov.au/ApplyingForAReview/NDIS.html](http://www.aat.gov.au/ApplyingForAReview/NDIS.html) or call 1800 228 333.

**More about why the NDIS is needed**

People with disability experience many problems with state and territory funded disability support. Problems have included long waiting lists to get support, not enough resources available to buy supports, and inconsistent allocation of support.

The NDIS will help fix three big problems about disability support in Australia:

It can be very hard for people with disability to get the support they need. Sometimes support is not available at all.

People with disability often have to live in a certain area to get supports. This can mean people need to move somewhere else if they can't get the supports they need where they live.

When people with disability do receive supports, they often don't have a choice about who provides them, or what organisation they are from.

**More about an insurance scheme**

It is important to know that the NDIS is not welfare or income support. Income support, also known as pension payments, is a ‘safety net’ designed to provide financial support for people who can’t get or maintain a paid job because of a permanent ‘impairment’. The Disability Support Pension (DSP) is for Australians with a physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability unable to work for more than 15 hours per week because of their disability.

The NDIS is different to welfare payments like the DSP, as it is a type of disability support designed specifically to provide resources for disability related needs. Support from the NDIS is not means tested. This means the support a person with disability receives from the NDIS does not change based on their income. This works differently to income support, including the DSP, where the support available to people with disability only kicks in when people don’t have any other sources of income.

The NDIS is completely new and works alongside income support, employee assistance programs, and other disability support programs. Because the NDIS works alongside other existing support programs it means the NDIS does not replace and has no effect on other disability support systems. This includes the Disability Support Pension.

1,135 WORDS (this section)

2,030 WORDS (from beginning)

**How does the NDIS work?**

The NDIS is a new way of providing disability support. It takes a lifetime approach to investing in people with disability. The NDIS supports people with disability to build skills and capability so they can participate in the community and employment. The NDIS helps people to:

Access mainstream services and supports. These are the services available for all Australians that you receive from people like doctors or teachers thrugh the health and education systems. It also covers areas like public housing and the justice and aged care systems.

Access community services and supports. These are activities and services available to everyone in your community. Such as sports clubs, community groups, libraries or charities.

Maintain your informal supports. This is help you get from your family and friends. It is support you don’t pay for and is generally part of most people’s lives.

Receive reasonable and necessary funded supports. The NDIS can pay for supports that are reasonable and necessary for you. This means they are related to your disability and are required for you to live an ordinary life and achieve your goals.

The NDIS will be available to you as long as you need support to manage your disability.

**What do I need to do?**

To access the NDIS, they will need to know some information about you. Everyone will provide this information in different ways. You might be asked to fill in a form or tell someone over the telephone.

If you currently get disability supports, your provider or the state or territory government may be able to give the NDIS this information for you. If you are not currently receiving supports, you may need to contact the NDIS yourself when it becomes available in your area. You can find out about when the NDIS is available in your area on the website [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

Once the NDIS has your information, they will contact you to let you know if you are able to access the NDIS and also tell you what the next steps are.

If you are not eligible for funding, you may still be able to access disability and mainstream supports available in the community. You can find information about your options to buid skills and capacbility and to link to these services on the NDIS website [www.ndis.gov.au/people-disability/information-and-referral](http://www.ndis.gov.au/people-disability/information-and-referral)

**My NDIS Pathway**

The NDIS will support Participants throughout their life for as long as they need it. This is why the relationship between the NDIS and the person with disability has been called ‘My NDIS pathway’.

We have already covered the beginning of the NDIS Pathway, called Access, earlier. A person can access the NDIS depending on their age, residency and disability. The next stages in along the Pathway are ‘My First Plan’, ‘Starting My Plan’, and ‘Reviewing My Plan’.

**My First Plan**

Participants entering the NDIS for the first time after July 2016 will have help with their NDIS First Plan. Your first plan is the start of a lifelong relationship with the NDIS and will continue to give you the support you need now. The NDIS First Plan process is a quicker version of the standard NDIS Planning process used during the trial period. The purpose of the First Plan process is to make sure people with disability can access important services and supports as quickly as possible. The NDIS will develop a First Plan by talking with the NDIS Participant to work out their most important support needs.

Your first plan will make sure you have time to learn more about your options with the NDIS and consider your goals for your next plan.

Your first plan may include the same supports ansd services you currently receive. It might include a range of supports provided by your family, friends, doctors, school and paid disability providers.

To create your first plan you will have a conversation with an NDIS represetnative about your current situation and supports. The NDIS will ask you how you do everyday things like having a shower and cooking food. This information will form the basis of your first plan. You will keep receiving your current supports until you have an NDIS plan in place.

Your first plan will be in place for 12 months. This will givce you time to think about how these supports arew working for you, and what else you might need to help you achieve your goals before you do your next plan.

It will also give you the opportunity to explore options to get involved in your local community through activities such as sports clubs and special interest and community groups.

**Starting My Plan**

Once your plan is approved, it is time to put it into action. The NDIS can work with you to start your plan.

Starting your plan might mean ‘shopping around’ for the provider of your choice. Support to do this is available from the NDIS. This may include support from a Local Area Coordinator (LAC) who can help you find community activities and the mainstream services that help your achieve your goals. Local Area Coordination is designed to support people with disability to explore and build an ordinary life wihin their communities.

Self direction. Self-direction means you have control over your supports and how they are provided. The National Disability Insurance Agency can help you manage payments to your providers or you can manage these payments yourself. You can get information on self-directing and self-managing your plan on the NDIS website at [www.ndis.gov.au/participants](http://www.ndis.gov.au/participants)

Choosing your providers. You can choose the providers you want to deleiver the services you need. You will usually need to make a written agreement with your providers to do this. Your existing provider may need to continue to delvier some supports initially.

Participant Portal. You can access your plan on the Participant Portal, an online tool available through the myGov website that keeps all of your documents together. You will receive portal access instructions once your plan is ready. If you choose to self-manage your funding, you can also process payments through the portal.

Starting your plan. While you are starting your plan, you might like to think about your future goals and consider activities and ways of achieving your goals. It is important to think about how your first plan is working for you – what is good and what is not. This will help you prepare for your next plan at your plan review.

Like every part of the NDIS, LACs will not duplicate or replace services that are carried out, or should be the responsibility of mainstream services - such as schools, hospitals or mental health services. LACs will also not provide supports that can be included in an Individual Funded Package or NDIS Plan.

**Reviewing My Plan**

While everyone is different, your first plan will generally be in place for 12 months before tha NDIS works with you to make changes. This is called a plan review.

It is good for people to have a think about goals in both the short and long term. Knowing what you would like to work towards will help you to think about the supports and services you may need to achieve those goals.

Goals can be big, like getting a job, or small, like learning the guitar. They might be about important relationships, like finding a life partner, or simply to meet more people so you can make more friends,

It’s important your NDIS plan, and any funded supports, continue to work well for you. This means that your plan is helping you to achieve your goals.

The Plan review is a more detailed NDIS Planning process than getting a first plan. Before you start your plan review, it can be helpful for you to explore options to get invloved in your local community through activities such as sport clubs, local theatres, special interest groups and community gardening.

If your circumstances or needs chane you can talk to us about potentially changing your plan. You can ask a family member, friend, carer, provider or advocate to support you during your first plan meetings and plan reviews.

Think about your life now, including which supports are helping you and which are not

Identify your strengths, interests, opportunities and challenges

Consider your current informal, mainstream, funded and community supports

Think about your goals and what you want to achieve

Write all this down so that you are prepared for your plan review.

1,400 WORDS (this section)

3,450 WORDS (from beginning)

**The principles of the NDIS**

**Human rights**

The NDIS is a bold scheme introduced to improve the lives of people with disability. For too long, Australian disability services have been underfunded and inflexible. They were built around the needs of the system rather than individual people with disability.

An international study found that Australians with disability had the lowest quality of life out of all of the developed countries in the study. Other research shows that Australians with disability have low levels of income and many don’t have jobs. People with disability are excluded from social events and also face a high level of violence.

It is nearly a decade since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was introduced. This is a legally binding document that talks about the rights of people with disability. This document aims to to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity”. The UNCRPD shows that there is a need to try and fix the problems people with disability face on a daily basis.

In today’s society people know we are all unique individuals with different preferences, needs and desires. This means people with disabilities should not be grouped together and get supports just because they have the same disability. Instead, the NDIS allows for people with disability to have very different goals and dreams to one another. Most importantly, the NDIS will provide resources for people with disability to be included in the community and work towards achieving these goals.

**Reasonable and necessary**

All supports supports funded by the NDIS must be ‘reasonable and necessary’. This is an important but complicated term.

Supports must be **reasonable**, meaning they provide value for money. This does not mean supports must be the lowest price possible. Instead, reasonable supports need to bring a large benefit to the person compared to their cost. This means the reasonable supports deliver value for money.

**Necessary** means the type of supports are required for the NDIS Participant so they can properly participate in society. These supports are required due to the NDIS Participant’s disability. This means somebody without a disability would not find these supports necessary, as they wouldn’t need them. Without these necessary supports, the NDIS Participant would not be able to participate in society as an equal citizen.

The NDIS will not pay for activities that everyone else in the community has to pay for themselves, for example footy club memberships, dance classes or guitar lessons.

**Choice and control**

Let’s now talk about one of the biggest benefits of the NDIS.

Before the NDIS existed disability support funding normally went straight to a service provider. The service provider supported the person with disability, but the person couldn’t easily choose which service provider they used. This could mean people felt ‘locked in’ to using the services of the service provider. Sadly, it meant that people did not have much choice and control about which service provider supported them.

People with disability can’t be the best they can be if they don’t have a say in who supports them, or how they are supported. This is different with the NDIS. NDIS Participants can **choose** when, where and how they get the support they need. NDIS funding for disability support is **controlled** by the person with disability themselves. This means the person decides which organisations can give them support. Making this decision gives people with disability the ability to be the main decision maker in their own life – just like everybody else.

Being able to shop around for the best service providers and products means NDIS Participants help decide what supports and services will be available to people with disability in the future. This is because service providers that don’t offer what people with disability want will shrink and close down, while new service providers will pop up and make the most of the new system. In order to get and keep customers, service providers and assistive technology manufacturers will need to adapt to the NDIS marketplace. This means they must have a strong customer focus if they want to grow.

**The dignity of risk**

Learning about the positive and negative consequences of decisions is called dignity of risk. People learn how to make good, well thought out decisions after being given the opportunity to make bad decisions. This learning experience is common to everybody, not just people with disability.

Some people with disability have not been allowed to take many risks as governments, families, and service providers often do their best to protect them and keep them safe. Research shows that to be independent the person with disability will need to take some risks, as this is how they will learn to make decisions that are best for them.

**Conclusion**

When people use the NDIS it will be very different to how people used disability services in the past. There will be a lot more resources available to people with disability as the sector will receive almost twice as much funding as it did before the NDIS. This large increase in funding will go towards making it much more likely for everybody to get the support they need.

Common elements of a good NDIS Plan The NDIS has the power to transform lives. A good NDIS Plan:

* Focuses on what the person with disability wants to do with their life
* Has room and the flexibility to change with the person with disability when life events, or big changes happen
* Helps the person with disability develop, and encourages them to do things they have not had a chance to do before
* Maximises the independence of the person with disability by allowing them to be proactive and responsive to any disability related needs
* Works towards improving the economic independence of the person with disability

**The NDIS is growing quickly**

There is going to be an extremely large growth in NDIS Participants between 2016 and 2019. This is because the NDIS is moving from the trial phase to the transition to full scheme. Between 2016 and 2019 the NDIS will need to develop NDIS Plans for over 430,000 new NDIS Participants. This is in addition to the 30,000 NDIS Participants already accessing the NDIS.

While the fast growth of the NDIS is great news for people with disability and their families, it makes it even more important to learn as much as you can about the NDIS independently. This is because NDIS staff will likely be very stretched for time.

**Further resources**

If you would like to get more information about the NDIS you can:

* Visit the NDIS website [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au) especially under ‘people with disability’
* Visit the Disability Loop website [www.disabilityloop.org.au](http://www.disabilityloop.org.au) especially under ‘resources’
* Call or visit disability specific support organisations like Blind Citizens Australia or Down Syndrome Australia
* Contact disability organisations for particular groups like Children and Young People with Disability Australia or First Peoples Disability Network.

**Thanks and goodbye**

Thank the group / person that invited you to speak, ask for questions (if time). Remind them of your name and availablity.

1,200 WORDS (this section)

4,650 WORDS (from beginning)