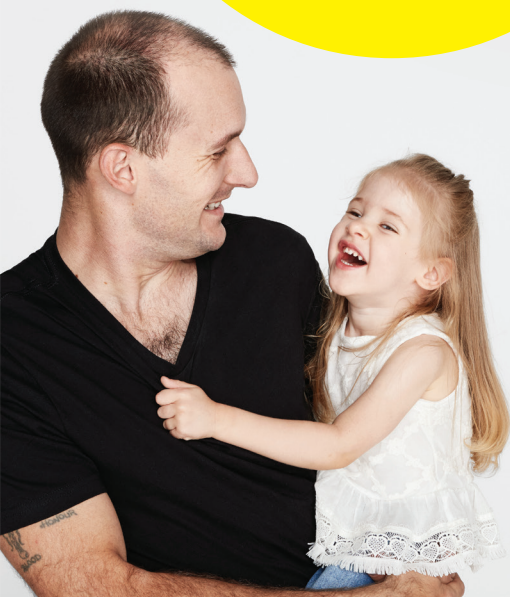


Your  
**NDIS**  
Success

# Information booklet



**Vision  
Australia**

Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.

# Understanding the NDIS

## What is the NDIS?

The NDIS is the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It's one of the ways people with a disability access funding and support. This new system means you can plan for the support you need and choose who provides it for you.

The NDIS is administered by a government body known as the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

## Am I eligible for the NDIS?

You're eligible for the NDIS if you have a permanent disability that significantly affects your ability to take part in everyday activities. You must be under the age of 65 when you enter the NDIS and live in an area where the NDIS is available. You must also be an Australian citizen or hold a permanent visa or a Protected Special Category visa.

## Why is the NDIS better for me?

The NDIS is here to help you achieve your goals. It's focussed on getting you the support you need to live your life to the fullest. More than ever, the NDIS puts you in control of your own life. It allows you to create and control your own plan of support and services. You may be eligible for more support under the NDIS than you currently receive.

## When will the NDIS be available?

Since 1 July 2016, the NDIS has been rolling out around Australia. The scheme has already been introduced in a number of areas across Australia, and will continue to roll out until 2019.

To find out when the NDIS is coming to your area visit [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au) or call 1800 800 110.

## **Blindness, low vision and the NDIS**

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

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

You can join the NDIS even if you're not currently accessing a disability service. Vision Australia can help you complete the forms you need to apply.

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

You can continue to access Vision Australia services while you're in the process of applying for NDIS funding. Vision Australia provides uninterrupted service to clients transitioning to the NDIS.



# How Vision Australia helps you through the NDIS planning process

To become an NDIS participant, you'll have to make a plan about how you would like to live your life and what support you'll need to help you achieve your goals.

Once you've completed your plan you'll then be asked to attend a planning meeting with an NDIS planner to assess your goals and needs before you can receive funding.

To ensure a great outcome with as little hassle for you as possible, we've found that effective pre-planning for the NDIS is essential.

One of our highly qualified and experienced staff can help you prepare for your meeting with the NDIS, putting together a plan that makes everything clear and simple. If you like, they can go with you to your meeting too.

We've found that this is the best way to ensure that you don't miss out on important services and supports. It's all about getting you the things you need to meet all of your goals.

Once your plan is approved, Vision Australia can also act as your ongoing support coordinator for as long as you need us. We'll help you understand your plan and link in with the right services. If this sounds like something you might need, be sure to ask the NDIS about support coordination funding in your plan.

With 150 years of experience, Vision Australia has a deep understanding of the needs of people who are blind or have low vision. We support more than 27,500 people of all ages and circumstances, through our 30 Vision Australia centres nationwide.

# Our services

Here are just some of the services Vision Australia offers:

- **Orthoptists**  
for vision assessments, advice and support
- **Occupational therapists**  
to help you make the most of your remaining vision
- **Orientation and mobility experts**  
to support you to get around safely
- **Emotional support**  
to help you adjust to vision loss
- **Support for children**  
specialised services and support for children aged 0-18
- **Social groups**  
to connect you with other people who are living with vision loss
- **Assistive technology**  
including technology training
- **Support**  
for your family, friends and carers.



# Getting ready for your planning meeting

The NDIS is a big change that comes with many benefits. Your planning meeting is where you get to set out your goals and the support and services you'll need to meet them. Throughout this process we'll be available to answer questions, offer support and help out in any way we can. Below are some useful tips to help you get the most out of your meeting.

## Step 1: Find out if you're eligible for the NDIS

To be eligible for the NDIS, you must:

- **have a permanent disability that significantly affects your ability to take part in everyday activities**
- **be under 65 years old**
- **live in an area that is NDIS eligible, or is due to go live within 6 months**
- **be an Australian citizen or hold a permanent visa or a Protected Special Category visa.**

You can receive more information about your eligibility and accessing the NDIS by calling the Vision Australia helpline on **1300 88 70 58**.

If you currently get disability services, you'll be called by the NDIS when you are ready. If not, you need to complete an access request form. All you have to do is call the NDIA on **1800 800 110** and ask for one. Once you have it, fill it out and attach evidence such as existing assessments or reports from health professionals. These will include information on what your disability is, how long it will last and the functional impact it has on your life. Submit this form and evidence to the NDIA.

## Step 2: Preparation is key for your NDIS planning meeting

You'll be required to attend a meeting with an NDIS planner to assess your goals and needs before you can receive funding. To get the most out of your planning meeting, make sure you're well prepared.

Do some preparation. There are many online resources available to help you prepare your NDIS plan. Just visit [visionaustralia.org/learn-more/ndis](http://visionaustralia.org/learn-more/ndis). Vision Australia also has experts who can help you develop your plan. This is particularly helpful for your first plan, or when you're having a plan review.



# Getting ready for your planning meeting (cont.)

## Step 3: Attend your NDIS planning session

Generally, you can choose how you meet with your NDIS planner. This may be over the phone or face-to-face in a place of your choosing.

Your NDIS planner will ask specific questions about your goals and needs, and then record your answers in their own words.

You can take a support person to your meeting with the NDIS. If you'd like one of the Vision Australia team to attend with you, please contact us to book a time.

Make sure you have all your supporting documentation. Things to bring to your NDIS meeting include:

- **completed Planning Guide and materials**
- **past therapy or specialist assessments**
- **letter(s) from your doctor or therapist to talk about your needs**
- **plans and diary appointments for day programs or community activities**
- **anything else that helps to communicate what you do now and what you want to do in the future.**



# What to do after your NDIS meeting

## Step 4: Selecting your provider

Once your plan is approved by the NDIS you'll need to select your service providers. It's important to choose the provider or providers that are right to deliver your services.

You're able to select any provider that has been registered by the NDIS. Vision Australia is a registered NDIS provider and a leading organisation for people who are blind or have low vision.



# Client stories

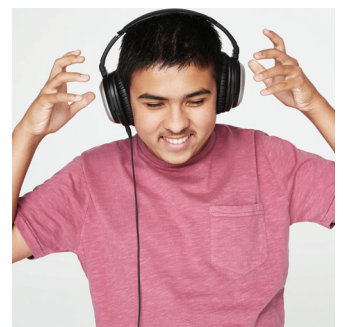
## Kim Coleman, age 50

Kim was one of the first clients to go through the NDIS in the Barwon region. As part of her preparation, Vision Australia worked closely with her to help set her goals and get the best plan possible.

Because Kim was new to the region the first areas of support in her NDIS plan were about helping her get around and become familiar with the new area.

Through her NDIS plan we've also helped Kim become more independent around the home. Things like lighting, signs that can be felt instead of read, and a safe kitchen environment were all addressed. Kim has also learnt new computer skills, making her more job-ready and more able to help her daughter with her homework.

Kim likes to take challenges head on. She's developed her skills, and has worked as an admin volunteer at Vision Australia and Barwon Health. She now volunteers for St. John of God Hospital in Geelong.



## Rhiannon Burrow, age 6

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

We supplied her with the latest portable magnifier, the Prodigy Connect 12, and trained her to ensure she got the most out of it. She also received assistance to use scissors and write on her own.

Rhiannon is now 6 years old, and Vision Australia is helping her move around safely and recognise any potential hazards with orientation and mobility training.

We've provided her with a new cane so she can navigate the supermarket and carpark. And now we're helping her with the next challenge: taking the school bus.



# FAQs

## **Q1. How is the NDIS different to the current system?**

The current system provides funding to organisations who then provide services to people with disability. The NDIS now gives control of the funding directly to the person with disability, who can then access the services they choose.

## **Q2. What is the difference between the NDIS and the NDIA and why is the NDIS called an 'insurance' scheme?**

The NDIS is the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The NDIA is the National Disability Insurance Agency that implements the NDIS. It's called an insurance scheme because every Australian contributes to it in a way that enables us to provide for everyone who is born with, or who acquires a disability. This works to help improve whole-of-life outcomes by building skills, capacity and – most importantly – independence.



### **Q3. What support is available for someone who is blind or has low vision?**

The support available under the NDIS is designed to enable you to connect with your community, gain employment and live an ordinary life. This support must relate to your disability and help you achieve your goals and needs. It covers things like travel (to get to work or school, or access the community); support around the home (gardening, cooking); and improved daily activities.

Examples of support include training and therapy on orientation and mobility, and occupational therapy. You may also be able to access assistive technology, such as magnifiers, long mobility canes, or CCTVs.

### **Q4. How do people access the NDIS?**

If you already receive support from a State or Territory disability service, you'll receive a phone call or an email when you're able to access the NDIS. Or feel free to call the NDIA and ask for an Access Request Form.

If you don't currently receive support, call the NDIS and ask for an Access Request Form. If you'd like, you can speak to a Vision Australia representative who can give you more information and support.

### **Q5. What is an NDIS plan?**

An NDIS Plan sets out the individual support services for a participant in the scheme. It's based on the results of your planning meeting, so it should reflect your goals and the support you need to achieve them.

After the planning process is complete, you'll be provided with your own NDIS plan. It will outline the support and funding available to you for the duration of your plan (typically one year). You can use this funding to buy services directly or through the support service you choose.

**Q6. With the individual NDIS planning process, what is goal setting and why is it important?**

When you have completed your Access Request Form, a meeting will be scheduled with a planner from the NDIA. You can ask for this to be in person or by phone.

In this planning meeting you'll discuss the support you currently receive, your goals and your needs, and the support you need to achieve them.

Goal setting is important because it will determine the types of support included in your plan. For instance, if your goal is to travel independently to your activities, the planner will work with you to identify the support you need to achieve this.

It may mean you receive funding for transport, orientation and mobility, along with some assistive technology to help navigate your way around the community.

It's important to remember that every individual plan will be different, even where goals are similar.

**Q7. How should people get ready for the NDIS?**

Find out when the NDIS is coming to your area by visiting [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au). There is also an access checklist to see if you're eligible. Then, take some time to think and prepare.

Feel free to use the Vision Australia 'Your NDIS Planning Guide', or talk to one of our NDIS experts for some advice. Make sure to think about your goals, what you want to achieve, and what sort of life you want to lead.

**Q8. How is the NDIS rolling out nationally and what happens if I'm in an area where the NDIS is not yet available?**

If you're in an area where the NDIS is not yet available, you can submit an Access Request Form six months before the rollout reaches your area. You'll then be at the front of the queue to access support through the NDIS once you have an approved plan.

In the meantime, you can continue to access services from organisations such as Vision Australia.





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