

# Understanding the NDIS

## What is the NDIS?

The NDIS is the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It changes forever the way support is provided to Australians with a disability.

With the NDIS, you’re able to create your own plan of support and services, based on your situation today and what you would like to achieve tomorrow.

It means you’ll have more control over the things that you want to do. You’re now able to identify the support you need and choose for yourself who you’d like to provide it for you.

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

## Why is the NDIS better for me?

The NDIS is focused on you and your needs. It is designed to allow you to think about the life you’d like to lead, then have a say in the kind of support you want in order to live that life.

In short, the NDIS is here to support you to achieve your goals.

More than ever before, the NDIS puts you in control of your own life, allowing you to create your own plan of support and services.

## What if I’m already receiving services?

You can continue to access services while you’re joining the NDIS. It may well be that you’re eligible for more support under the NDIS.

A representative of the NDIA will contact you to discuss your switch to the NDIS and your ongoing support needs through the transition.

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

You can still join the NDIS if you’re not currently accessing a disability service.

If you are not currently accessing a disability service, you will need to complete and submit an Access Request form to the NDIA. Vision Australia can assist with this.

## Blindness, low vision and the NDIS

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

Make sure to share your goals and needs relating to blindness and low vision in your planning meeting with the NDIA representative. The Vision Australia ‘Your NDIS Planning Guide’ can help you to think about what you need to request and prepare you to get the outcome that best suits you.

## How to access the NDIS

Criteria for eligibility

To access the NDIS a person must:

• Have a permanent disability that significantly affects their ability to take part in everyday activities;

• Be aged under 65 when they first enter the NDIS;

• Be an Australian citizen or hold a permanent visa or a Protected Special Category visa; and

• Live in an area where the NDIS is available.

## NDIS roll out and timing

From 1 July 2016, the NDIS has been rolling out around Australia. It’s being introduced in stages to ensure it is successful and sustainable. People will enter the NDIS differently depending on where they live and the type of support they currently receive.

To find out when the NDIS is coming to your area visit www.ndis.gov.au or call 1800 800 110.

# The NDIS process

## Step 1: NDIS contact, eligibility and access

Find out about your eligibility and whether or not your area is currently included in the NDIS at [NDIS website link](http://www.ndis.gov.au/)

## Step 2: Getting plan ready

Think about what you really need and want to achieve ahead of your planning session. Vision Australia can help work through this to articulate all of the supports you need.

## Step 3: Your NDIS planning session

Develop a plan that is going to suit your situation. You can take a support person to the planning session to assist you through the process.

## Step 4: Selecting your provider

Vision Australia are a registered NDIS provider and the leading provider of services to people who are blind or have low vision.

# Vision Australia Services

Vision Australia provides services, advice and assistive technology to people who are blind or have low vision have access to, and can fully participate in, every part of life – when and as they choose. These supports are considered “improved daily living”. Look for this in your plan.

## Orthoptics

• Assess your level of vision impairment.

• Get a recommendation on equipment and strategies to improve your vision, then trial them to find what works best for you.

## Occupational therapy and equipment

• Get help to assess your daily life, your ability to work, and what your limitations are.

• Access a broad spectrum of support to help you become more independent.

## Orientation & mobility training, and equipment

• Get support to acquire the equipment you’ll need to support your independence. This may include mobility devices, canes and Seeing Eye Dog Australia.

• Receive training to ensure that you remain mobile – and safe – when you’re out and about in the community.

## Assistive technology and training

• We support you by looking at the kind of technologies that may help you with everyday tasks, such as reading, and using computers and telephones.

• Get a recommendation on specialised vision equipment for you and try before you buy.

• Get our help to determine if Braille training may be suitable.

## Paediatric support

• Access a wide range of support for children who are blind or have low vision. This may include speech

pathology, sensory integration, motor skills support, language development and more.

• We can help children improve their social skills and general life skills and run regular school holiday programs.

# My planning meeting with the NDIA

## Step 1:

Do some preparation. You may wish to use Vision Australia’s ’Your NDIS Planning Guide’, which you can then take to your meeting.

## Step 2:

Feel free to take a support person with you to your planning meeting. If you would like us to attend, contact us to book a time.

## Step 3:

Bring supporting documentation as it will make the planning conversation easier.

* 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 future.

## Step 4:

After your planning meeting, the NDIA will provide you with an NDIS Plan, detailing the funding and support you can access. You can request to be put in touch with Vision Australia for services, or get in touch with us yourself.

# FAQ’s

## 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, and the NDIA is the National Disability Insurance Agency that implements the NDIS.

It’s an insurance scheme because every Australian contributes to it in a way that enables us to provide for everyone and anyone 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?

Support available under the NDIS is designed to enable you to connect with your community, gain employment and live an ordinary life.

The support must relate to your disability and help you achieve your goals and needs. It may include things like: travel (to get to employment or school, or access the community); support around the home (gardening, learning how to cook meals independently); or improved daily activities, which may include training and therapy on orientation and mobility, or occupational therapy.

You may also be able to access assistive technology, such as magnifiers, long mobility canes, or CCTVs.

## Q4. How do people access NDIS?

If you already receive support from a State or Territory disability service, you will receive a phone call or an email when you’re able to access the NDIS.

Alternatively, feel free to call the NDIA and request access information and an Access Request Form.

If you don’t currently receive support, call the NDIS and request an Access Request Form, or speak to a Vision Australia representative who can provide you with additional 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 is based on the results of your planning meeting, and should reflect your goals and the support you need to achieve them.

After the planning process is complete, you will be provided with an NDIS plan, which outlines the support and funding available to you for the time of your plan (typically one year). You may 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 an NDIA or LAC planner. You can request this to be in person or by phone.

In this meeting, you will discuss the support you currently receive, your goals and your needs, and the support you need to meet these goals.

Goal setting is important because it will determine the types of support included in your plan. For instance, if your goal is to independently travel to your community 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 (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 am in an area where the NDIS is not yet available?

If you are in an area where the NDIS is not yet available, you may submit an Access Request Form six months prior to the roll out reaching your area. You’ll then be at the top 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.

# NDIS client success stories

## Case Study One

Kim Coleman, age XX

<List vision impairment?>

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

Because Kim was new to the area, our first areas of support were around orientation, mobility and public transport training.

We’ve also supported her independence around the home, in areas such as lighting, tactile signage and cutting board assistance. She has learnt new computer skills too, improving her work readiness and enabling her 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 has also just applied to volunteer for St. John Ambulance Australia.

## Case Study Two Rhiannon Burrow, age 8

<List vision impairment?>

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, the Prodigi Connect 12, 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.

Rhiannon is now 8 years old, and Vision Australia is helping her with orientation and mobility training. We’ve provided her with a new rainbow-coloured cane so she can navigate the supermarket and carparks. And now we’re helping her with the next challenge: taking the school bus.