

# I can ACCESS

the **NDIS**



**Nine steps**  
to completing your  
NDIS application.

**Embark** improves access to the NDIS  
for adults experiencing homelessness  
and mental illness.



**Journey towards  
a contributing  
life with the NDIS:  
A roadmap  
for people with  
psychosocial  
disability.**

Project Embark is funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

# Nine key steps



**Step 1:** Understand what the NDIS is and whether it might be right for you.



**Step 2:** Check your eligibility.



**Step 3:** Are you ready and do you want to access the NDIS?



**Step 4:** Set goals.



**Step 5:** Gather evidence.



**Step 6:** Get an Access Request Form.



**Step 7:** Complete an Access Request Form.



**Step 8:** Submit an Access Request Form.



**Step 9:** What if my Access Request Form is not approved?



# Step 1

## Understand what the NDIS is and whether it might be right for you.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is an Australia-wide scheme that aims to improve the lives of people with disability, including psychosocial disability.

### Things to know about the NDIS:

- ✓ I will be able to keep my pension
- ✓ I will have choice and control about the supports I might receive
- ✓ Mental illness **is** included where it is likely to be lifelong and substantially impacts my ability to participate in day-to-day life

The NDIS does not pay for housing; however some packages are provided within supported accommodation services. Typically, NDIS funds assistance from support workers, modifications, transport and assistive technology.

### The NDIS may fund reasonable and necessary supports to:

- Assist you with daily living e.g. cooking meals, attending appointments and staying healthy
- Help you to achieve your goals.

**TIP:** Review some resources and stories from other people who may have had similar experiences with homelessness and mental health issues to learn how the NDIS has worked for them.

## Step 2

### Check your eligibility.

**To be eligible for the NDIS you must meet the following criteria:**

- Are you under 65?
- Are you an Australian citizen, permanent resident or Protected Special Category visa holder?
- Do you live in Australia?
- Do you have a mental illness that is likely to be lifelong and substantially impacts on your ability to participate in day-to-day life?

If you answered yes to all of the above, then you may be eligible for funding under the NDIS.



## Step 3

### Are you ready and do you want to access the NDIS?

The journey to access the NDIS can be time consuming, is sometimes challenging and might bring up issues that are difficult for you.

- What support can you get through this process to collect and put together information about your life?
- What would help you in a practical sense to prepare?
- How can you prepare yourself for the fact that the process will take time and that your application may not be successful?



**TIP:** Work through the **I can prepare to Access the NDIS** workbook



## **Step 4**

### Understand goals and how the NDIS might assist you.

Talk with someone you trust about how you would like your life to be. Here are some discussion starters:

- **Mobility:** Is mobility an issue for you, and is it related to the physical impacts of your mental health? Do you have trouble using public transport or a car?
- **Communication:** Does your mental health make it difficult to communicate and if so, how? Would support to communicate with service providers, family, friends and others improve how you live?
- **Social interaction:** Do you ever feel like you would like to make more friends, improve relationships with family or improve your skills during social interactions?
- **Learning:** What has your experience of learning and education been? What role has your mental health played?
- **Self-care or self-management:** Does your mental illness make it more difficult for you to take care of yourself, some, most or all of the time?

If you have difficulty with these parts of your life due to the impact of your mental illness, think about what goals you might set if you had support to achieve them.

**TIP:** If your access request is approved there will be time later to develop your goals, but it can be useful for your initial request if you have some ideas.



## Step 5

### Gather evidence.

To access the NDIS, you will need to provide evidence of your psychosocial disability that shows that:

- It is likely to be lifelong, and
- It has a substantial impact on your day-to-day life.

A treating doctor or specialist will need to provide evidence to show you meet these criteria. They usually do this by filling in Part F of the Access Request Form (ARF), which will happen in Step 7.

Before you go to the doctor it is a good idea to collect the following evidence to support your application:

- If you can, get a letter or report from an occupational therapist, as this is particularly useful in demonstrating the impact on your day-to-day life.
- It may be helpful to have a trusted support worker, family member, friend or carer to write a letter to help paint a complete picture of the impact of your psychosocial disability.
- Collect any assessments you think might be useful, such as the Life Skills Profile (LSP-16).
- It is also useful to gather any financial administration, guardianship and community treatment orders you have, as they can help show the impact of the psychosocial disability.

These reports and letters can be useful to give to the doctor to help them when they are filling in their part of the ARF.

**TIP:** Each supporting document should focus on how your mental illness prevents you from achieving your goals and the substantial impact that it has on specific activities in your day-to-day life.

## Step 6

### Get an Access Request Form.

To apply for the NDIS, you will need to complete and submit an NDIS Access Request Form (ARF).

You or your family member or support worker can call the NDIS on **1800 800 110** or visit your local NDIA office to get an ARF.

You can also make a Verbal Access Request (VAR) by calling the NDIA (1800 800 110). The NDIA representative will talk you through the process and ask you to provide your details over the phone, rather than you having to complete a form.



## Step 7

### Complete your Access Request Form.

Once you have received an ARF, it will need to be completed.

- Fill out your personal details.
- If you do not have consistent accommodation, ask a support provider you trust whether their contact details can be used for the application form.
- Have a medical professional complete Part F of the form. Remember to book a long appointment for this and contact your Primary Health Network for suggested providers who offer bulk billing services.
- Sign and date the form when it is completed.



## Step 8

### Submit your Access Request Form.

Now that you have completed your ARF and supporting documents, it is time to submit them to the NDIA.

**You can do this by:**

**Email:** [nat@ndis.gov.au](mailto:nat@ndis.gov.au)

**Post:** GPO Box 700, Canberra ACT 2601

Or in person at your nearest NDIA office.

**TIP:** Make sure you keep a copy!



## **Step 9**

### What if my Access Request Form is not approved?

Do not be disheartened – you have the option to resubmit your application with further information. Sometimes it can take a couple of attempts to pull all the required information together in a way that is consistent.

- It's possible the NDIS will ask for more information
- Continue to explore other pathways of support with your service providers

The NDIA or Local Area Coordinator can refer you to services in your area.



# For information, support and advice about the NDIS:

Visit the NDIS website, contact  
your local NDIA office or call  
the 1800 number directly



**[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)**

**The NDIA: 1800 800 110**



## **Acknowledgement**

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Visit the NDIS website for more information  
[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)*