



What's new in the NDIS?

Summary of key trends Q4 ending June 2020

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Is your plan review meeting coming up?

Our NDIS experts have built a great tool to prepare you for the critical plan review meeting. You'll know exactly what to say to get your next plan right and increase your chances to get the funding you need.

Go to www.providerchoice.com.au/plan-reviewer. It's free for everyone!

About this report

Almost a decade has passed since political leaders from state and federal governments in Australia agreed to dream up a new insurance model that could pay for the long-term care of people with disability. The idea was to shift from a crisis-driven disability welfare system to a new scheme that would truly focus on the individual.

Today, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a fully-fledged support system that's available across the continent. Around 392,000 Australians participated in the NDIS at the end of June 2020. About 2,000 more are joining each week.

The uniquely tailored funding packages these participants receive are often life-changing, allowing them to make their own choices, become more independent and participate more fully in the community.

This report sums up the latest trends in the NDIS over the June quarter. It offers a snapshot of

- the most common disabilities in the scheme;
- striking shifts in the overall participant profile;
- current demand for support coordination;
- participant preferences in managing their plans.

We hope you enjoy the read.

Your

Provider Choice team

About Provider Choice

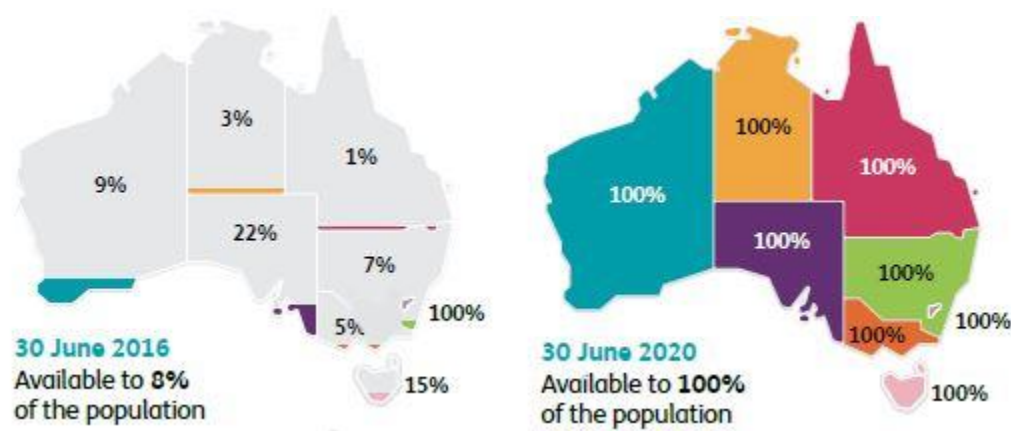
We believe the NDIS is easier to navigate when someone helps you find your way.

At Provider Choice, we made it our mission to guide families and support coordinators through the complexities of the scheme – by using clear, simple language that our own families can understand, and by offering easy technology that anyone can use for free.

1. Participants

The NDIS is now available everywhere in Australia.

The end of the fourth quarter marks a milestone: as of 1 July 2020, the national rollout of the NDIS is complete. The scheme is now available to all Australians, including those living on the Christmas and Cocos Islands.



Source: NDIS Quarterly Report to disability ministers, 30 June 2020

The NDIS now supports 392,000 Australians.

The NDIS continues to add more participants at a rapid rate.

- There were **28,800 new participants between April and June**.
- This means more than 2,000 Australians join the scheme per week.
- At the end of the quarter, the NDIS supported 391,999 Australians.

New South Wales remains the largest NDIS market by participants (32%), followed by Victoria (27%), Queensland (19%) and South Australia (9%). Western Australia, the last state to join, accounted for 8% of all NDIS participants at the end of June. The scheme's architects expect that at full capacity the share of participants from each state will roughly align with its population share.

Every second new participant is a child aged 0-14.

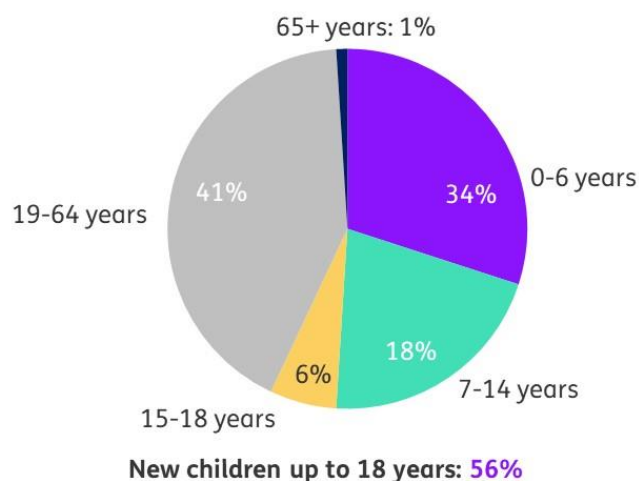
More children than ever before are entering Australia's National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Very young children are the fastest growing age cohort and their percentage will continue to increase, as the NDIA remains committed to support children with developmental delay and other signs of disability as early as possible.

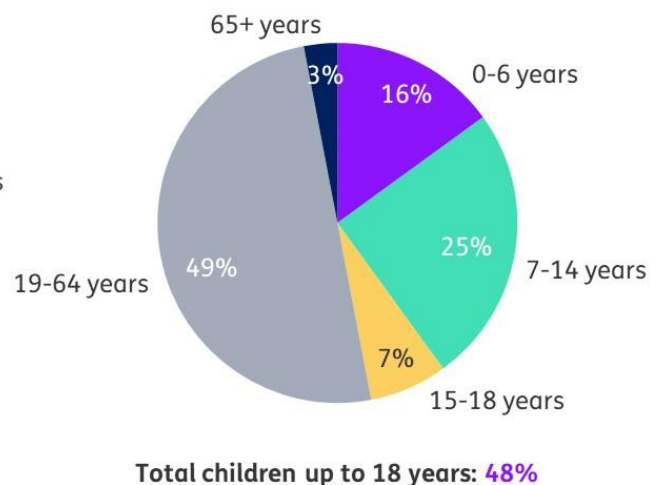
- **Every second person** (52%) entering the scheme in the June quarter was a child between 0 and 14 years.
- **Children aged 0-6 years** made up 34% (or 9,804) of all new participants in the June quarter – more than in the March quarter (30%).
- The NDIS is now taking in more than double the share of kids 0-6 years than on average in all previous quarters combined (15%).
- **Children aged 7-14 years** made up 18% (or 5,250) of all new participants in the June quarter – less than in the past (25%).

The majority of all new NDIS participants are children

New NDIS entrants by age in Q4



Total NDIS participants by age on 30 June 2020



Most NDIS participants are male.

The NDIS continues to support twice as many males (61%) than females (38%) with a disability. The reason: many disabilities – autism, for example – affect boys more often than girls.

As the NDIS is adding significantly more children than in the past, the gender imbalance is particularly striking among the scheme's youngest participants, many of whom join because they've been diagnosed with autism or developmental delay.

The male-to-female ratio is

- 2.3 for children 0 to 6 years
- 2.4 for children 8 to 14 years
- 2.1 for teenagers aged 15 to 18.

In comparison: adult men and women are almost equally represented in the scheme, with ratios closer to 1:1 for participants over 35 years.



These disabilities commonly affect boys:

Autism. On average, boys are [four times as likely](#) to have autism as girls. Not surprisingly, the NDIS supports 3.1 times as many male participants with autism as females.

Developmental delay. When a child's development is not at the level expected for their age and hampers their ability to perform daily routines and activities, it's considered developmentally delayed. Boys are more commonly affected. The male-to-female ratio in the NDIS currently stands at 2.5.

Other sensory/speech impairments. Sensory disabilities affect one or more of a person's senses: touch, hearing, sight, taste, smell, or spatial awareness. The male-to-female ratio for people in the NDIS whose primary disability falls into this category was 2.7 at the end of June.

2. Disability

Autism remains the most common primary disability.

Autism is the number one reason for Australians receiving support through the scheme. At the end of June, around 123,000 people – that's nearly every third person in the NDIS (31%) – had a primary disability on the autism spectrum.



The true number of participants with an autism spectrum disorder in the NDIS is even higher, as many participants suffer from multiple disabilities.

About 5% of all participants have **autism as a secondary disability**, according to latest available NDIS data. Two-thirds of these participants suffer from an intellectual disability as their primary disability. Autism can also coincide with psychosocial disability, Down Syndrome and cerebral palsy.

In the June quarter, 29% of all new participants joined the NDIS with autism as their primary disability. **South Australia** (37%) and **Western Australia** (35%) recorded above-average autism rates. They are lowest in the **Northern Territory** (23%).

There's a substantial increase in developmental delay.

New participants are more commonly accepted into the NDIS because of a developmental delay. This is in line with the growing number of children in the scheme.

In the June quarter, 18% of all new NDIS participants in Australia entered primarily because of developmental delay. This is triple the share of prior quarters (6%).

Psychosocial disability is becoming more common.

The proportion of participants entering the NDIS with a primary psychosocial disability was much higher in the June quarter (13%) than in the past (quarterly average: 9%). The rise is the result of a push within the NDIS to reach more Australians suffering from serious mental illness.

Less participants join with intellectual disability.

The share of Australians joining the NDIS primarily due to intellectual disability continues to fall.

In both the March and June quarter, new entrants with an intellectual disability accounted for 11%, whereas in prior quarters their share was twice as high (22%).

This decline is due to the transition of old, state-based disability schemes to the new NDIS. During the rollout of the new scheme, participants with an intellectual disability were among the first to join. Many have now successfully made that move, causing rates of new participants with intellectual disability to normalise.

Selected primary disabilities in the NDIS on 30 June 2020	
Autism	31% (122,830)
Intellectual Disability*	22% (84,769)
Psychosocial Disability	10% (37,795)
Developmental Delay	7% (26,809)
Hearing Impairment	5% (19,208)
Cerebral Palsy	4% (15,635)
Multiple Sclerosis	2% (7,494)
Stroke	1% (5,648)

* Down Syndrome is included in Intellectual Disability, representing 3% of all participants

3. Support coordination

Funding for support coordination continues to grow.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) shows increasing willingness to include support coordination in participant plans. A record share of families now receives the necessary funding to pay for a support coordinator.

In the June quarter, 44% of newly approved plans came with a budget for support coordination, up from an average of 38% in past quarters. In total, four out of ten NDIS plans now include funding for support coordination.

The NDIA is reviewing the Support Coordinator model.

Shortly before publishing the latest quarterly report, the NDIA released a Discussion Paper on the future of support coordination.

The agency is currently reviewing feedback from all corners of the community – participants, providers, and support coordinators – to get more clarity about

- **Timings:** When and for how long should support coordination be funded in a participant's plan?
- **Role:** What can a participant expect from a support coordinator?
- **Quality:** How can participants be sure they receive value for money?
- **Decisions:** What do support coordinators do to build a participant's decision-making capacity?
- **Conflict:** How should providers handle conflicts of interest?

Once it has read through all the submissions it received, the NDIA said it would share its findings publicly in a report.

More support coordinators work as sole traders.

As the NDIA is offering more funding for support coordination, the number of active registered support coordination services has begun to increase. This trend that has been showing for several months now.

The numbers: In total, 942 registered support coordination services have been operating in Australia since the NDIS first started (prior quarter: 871). Only less than half of those (487) were actually active in the June quarter. Still, the number of active registered support coordination providers is now higher than it was at the end of December 2019 (406).

Between April and June, 71 registered support coordination services were active for the first time ever.

The businesses: The majority of all 487 active support coordination providers had registered as **companies/organisations**, while 17% (or 81) were registered as **sole traders**. The number of sole-trading support coordinators has nudged higher from the March quarter, when 16% (or 68) were registered as individuals.



4. Managing plans

Plan-managed plans are becoming more popular.

The number of NDIS participants who choose to have their budget managed by a plan manager is steadily growing.

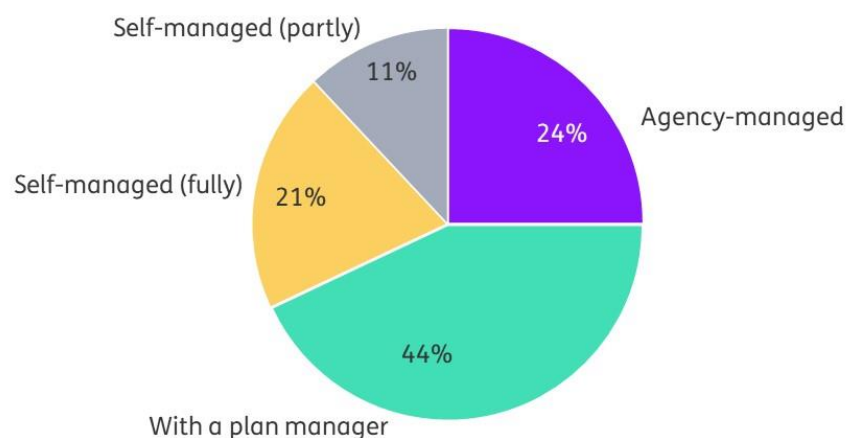
In the June quarter, 44% of all people who received a new NDIS plan had funding for **plan management** included in their budget – more than on average in previous quarters (38%).

The numbers reflect a trend that has been gaining momentum for some time. As a result, professional plan management is now overall the most popular management style for NDIS plans across Australia (40% on 30 June), ahead of agency-management (28%) and self-management (31%).

The NDIA still manages the bulk of all plan budgets by dollar value. At the end of the quarter, **agency-managed** plans accounted for 59% of total funding granted. The gap is closing, though. In the June quarter, plan-managed plans (42% of plan budget) and agency-managed plans (44%) were almost on par with their respective slices of managed funding.

44% of new NDIS plans are managed by a plan manager

Newly approved plans by financial management type, Q4 2019/20



Every third NDIS plan is self-managed.

The idea of having full choice and control over all aspects of NDIS funding has lasting appeal. Every third participant now chooses to do the bookkeeping, budgeting and invoicing themselves. It's a particularly popular option for parents managing their children's plans.

The percentage of participants who **self-manage (fully or partly)** their plans remained steady in the June quarter at 31%. Yet the amount of funding held in self-managed plans is usually lower than that in plan-managed or agency-managed plans. This makes sense, given it is easier to control a budget when it's relatively small.

Self-managed plans accounted for 12% of all plan budgets at the end of June.

Conclusion

Many major trends within the NDIS continued to play out in the three months from April to June. Among those are an ongoing shift towards supporting young children with early signs of disability, including autism and developmental delay.

Autism, intellectual disability and developmental delay remain the most common reasons why Australians get accepted into the NDIS. Severe mental illness, also known as psychosocial disability, is becoming more common in the NDIS, following a push by the NDIA to improve the support for this vulnerable group of people.

This quarter also confirms the growing significance of support coordinators and plan managers in the scheme. Support coordinators have been benefiting from a greater inclusion of funding for this support in participant plans. Meanwhile, plan managers are managing an increasingly large share of plan budgets and assisting participants in staying on top of their budgets.

Who is Provider Choice?

We are NDIS experts. We provide plan management services and easy-to-use technology for all NDIS participants.

If you have any plan management questions or queries, please get in touch with:

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