



Employment and the NDIS

While the responsibility for disability employment predominantly sits with the Department for Social Services (DSS), increased economic participation for people with a disability is one of the expected outcomes of the NDIS.

The NDIA sees its role is to lift participants' aspirations and to support participants that want to work, and to fund services that complement (rather than replace or duplicate) those offered by DSS.

The following chart shows how NDIS support complements other disability employment supports.



Work capacity assessment

The first step for people with disability (including NDIS participants) who want support to enter employment is to complete an employment services assessment (ESAT) or a job capacity assessment (JCA). Both are organised by Centrelink and a participant may well have already completed one of these before joining the NDIS.

An ESAT explores the challenges a person faces when looking to work, their capacity to work and the most appropriate employment services program for that person.

A JCA considers medical evidence and how a person's condition affects their ability to work, if they are medically eligible for the disability support pension and any assistance they may need to get a job.



If a person is assessed as having capacity to work over 8 hours per week, they will be eligible for the Disability Employment Services (DES) program.

Disability Employment Services (DES)

Disability Employment Services (DES) is a DSS-funded support that helps people with a disability to find and keep a job. People do not have to be in the NDIS to receive support from DES as it supports people with disability, injuries and health conditions.

DES provides two types of support:

1. Disability Management Service which assists jobseekers to find work and provide occasional support in the workplace to keep their job.
2. Employment Support Service which assists jobseekers with a permanent disability to get a job and, for those who need regular, ongoing support, keep their job. This includes applying for funding to obtain workplace specific supports and equipment and funding for transport for work activities (i.e. meetings).

More information can be found on the [Job Access Website](#).

NDIS-funded employment supports

A person's NDIS plan can complement and facilitate DES support, or offer standalone employment support where a person is not eligible for DES.

Where appropriate, the NDIA requires that employment goals and career development be discussed at each planning meeting. Employment supports won't be the same for every participant, so planners and support workers must ensure they align with the participant's goals.

Through the NDIS, participants can be connected to mainstream supports, resources and programs, and should be empowered to choose the kinds of supports in their NDIS plans that will assist them to work towards their employment goals.

The NDIA has tools to help participants plan their goals around employment on their [website](#). More information about the NDIS Participant Employment Strategy's broader vision, goals and plan (including market development) can be found [here](#).

Employment support can be built into a participant's plan in the following ways.

Finding and Keeping a Job (supported employment)

Through the 'Finding and Keeping a Job' budget item, participants who do not have the capacity to participate in 8 hours per week of mainstream employment may gain supported employment through Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs).



ADEs support people with disability to engage in a wide variety of work tasks such as packaging, assembly, production, recycling, screen printing, plant nursery, garden maintenance and landscaping, cleaning services, laundry services and food services.

ADEs offer similar working conditions as other employers and an opportunity for people with a disability to contribute and connect to their local community.

Employment can be ongoing, or it can be a stepping stone for people to gain skills and confidence to try other forms of employment.

Finding and Keeping a Job (individual support items)

If a participant has employment as a goal in their plan the NDIS can help them discover what work means to them, build essential foundation skills, explore barriers, and develop a career plan.

To do this, the NDIS can fund employment-related capacity building supports, including assessment and counselling. This can include a plan to transition to DES supports or transition from employment in an ADE to employment in the open market.

Other core and capacity building supports

Other supports may be included in a person's NDIS plan that help them with an employment goal.

For example, transport costs to and from work may be included in a participant's core budget, if reasonable and necessary requirements have been met.

Social skills building and other capacity building funded supports, that are not explicitly employment-related supports, might also be considered in a participant's plan.

It is helpful to think outside of the box to facilitate pathways to future employment.

Example: Supporting a person to reach their employment goals

Maree, an NDIS participant living with psychosocial disability, has indicated that she would like to enter paid employment working with animals. Maree and her Psychosocial Recovery Coach, Brenda, prepare for her planning meeting by working through the NDIS' [Let's talk about work booklet](#).

Maree and Brenda find a TAFE Course "Certificate II in Animal Studies" which may be a stepping stone towards her goal.

Maree's previous job capacity assessment indicated that she needs further support before she can work over 8 hours. During her planning meeting, it is agreed that her plan should include supports assist Maree to build her social skills, confidence and enter mainstream employment supports. This would include preparing for the Employment Services Assessment to enable Maree to enter access DES.



Through DES, Maree may be able to have her TAFE course funded and be supported towards her employment goals.

Brenda helps Maree choose a provider who offers both NDIS and DES-funded supports so Maree can seamlessly transition between the two systems.

Other things to be aware of

Employer responsibilities

Employers have a responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate employees who have a disability. Reasonable adjustments include changes to premises, facilities, equipment, work practices or training that ensure that the person with disability can do their job. More information regarding the obligations of employers can be found on the [Job Access Website](#).

Supports for young people

This factsheet largely focuses on the supports available to adults. Be aware that the options for young people may be somewhat different. For example, they may join the Eligible School Leavers program rather than DES, or they may be able to access NDIS School Leaver Employment Supports.

Supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote areas may be able to access the Community Development Program, an employment and community development service and supports job seekers in remote Australia to build skills, address barriers and contribute to their communities through a range of flexible activities.

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