



# Participant transport & provider travel in the NDIS

Transport is an everyday cost but when a person's disability makes travel more difficult or expensive, NDIS participants may be able to get some funding for transport in their plans. Providers can also, in some cases, claim travel-related costs from a participant's plan when the costs are directly related to providing a NDIS service.

## Principles for funding participant transport in the NDIS

### Application of the reasonable and necessary principles

Remember, the NDIS is individualised. Availability of transport funding (how much, for what purpose and so forth) will vary from one person to the next based on the application of the reasonable and necessary principles.

### Goals alignment and capacity building

Funding should build independence, including capacity to travel independently. To fund any travel the NDIA must be satisfied that the support will assist the participant to pursue their goals.

### Reasonable expectations of informal networks

NDIA will take into account what is reasonably necessary to expect from family, friends, informal networks, the community and so forth. For example, it is reasonable to expect that a partner or carer could drive a participant to an after-hours appointment on occasion but, it is not reasonable to expect a participant's partner/carers to drive them to work every day.

## Participant transport

### Funding for participants to pay for their own travel – the transport budget

If someone isn't able to catch public transport in the same way that people without disabilities can (e.g., because of their disability, travel costs them more) then they may be eligible for transport funding. Participants can use this funding to pay for independent transport (e.g., taxis) or registered transport providers for travel that supports the person achieve the goals in their plan.

The decision to fund transport in a person's plan is based on the reasonable and necessary criteria. To get this funding a person will need to show that:

- They cannot use public transport without substantial difficulty as a result of their disability
- The transport funding is required for improved community access e.g., it enables them to pursue work, social, educational or other activities that are relevant to achieving the goals in their NDIS plan.



The NDIA will then determine the level of transport funding for a person based on how often they need to access the community. More information about the different transport funding levels is provided on the NDIS website, ['transport funding'](#) page and in the [price guide](#).

### **Other ways the NDIS supports participant transport**

The main aim of the NDIS is to increase the independence of people with disability. In addition to funding to cover transport costs (described above) people may also be able to access supports to increase their capacity to travel independently (e.g., individual life skills development/training to use public transport) or to address other barriers to independent travel (e.g., anxiety in social situations, difficulties learning public transport schedules). These challenges should be discussed at planning meetings so the supports can be included in the persons plan.

There are also options for providers to claim for travel costs when delivering some NDIS supports where appropriate, and where required for service delivery, as discussed below.

### **Principles for claiming provider travel costs**

Providers may claim travel related costs from a person's NDIS plan when the travel costs are directly related to providing an NDIS service. There are two circumstances where it may be suitable to charge for travel costs:

- When traveling with the participant as part of the service/support (Activity-based transport)
- When travelling to the participant in order to provide the service (e.g., the service is delivered in the person's home or other out-of-office location, provider travel).

We explain the different rules for charging for travel based on the circumstance in detail in later sections of this fact sheet.

### **Check the price guide**

The NDIS permit providers to charge for labour and non-labour travel-related costs when these costs arise as a direct result of delivering face to face services to participants. It is important to check the section of the price guide that relates to the service you are providing to see if it is suitable to charge for travel-related costs.

Labour costs are the costs of the worker's time to deliver the support, it is only acceptable to charge for this if the worker themselves is also being paid for the travel time. There are also specific rules regarding how much time can be charged depending on the context (e.g., traveling with the person or traveling to the person), this is explained in more detail later.

Non-labour costs include the mileage, parking, road tolls and other direct travel costs associated with the support being delivered. There are separate line items that you need to use when charging for non-labour costs which will be available in the portal if applicable for your service.

### **Clear service agreements**

Any charges for travel-related costs must be discussed with the participant in advance and stated in the service agreement.



## Split costs

If you are supporting two or more participants, travel costs need to be apportioned amongst the participants with the agreement of all participants in advance. Examples of how to apportion costs in different contexts are provided in the price guide.

## Minimise travel costs

When charging participants for provider travel costs - it is good practice to minimise these costs as much as possible. Remember that the funding comes from a participant's plan so the less travel time they are charged, the more they can use the funding for direct service delivery.

## Claiming for travel with the participant – Activity based transport

Providers who are travelling *with* a participant, as part of their service delivery (e.g., travelling to, and attending, an event with the person), may be able to charge for labour and non-labour costs if permitted in the price guide. Only services that have an associated line item for 'activity-based transport' can claim for this. Most core supports that facilitate community access can claim, and some specific capacity building supports can too - see the price guide for more information.

When charging for the workers time, providers of activity-based transport can claim for the whole time the person spent providing the support and traveling with the person, at the hourly rate of the support.

For example, if it takes you 30 minutes to travel with someone to a venue and then you spend an hour with them when you get there, the person is charged for 1.5 hours at the hourly rate for the support. See the price guide for information about how to claim these charges in the provider portal.

## Claiming for traveling to the participant – provider travel

If the support includes provisions for claiming for provider travel (check the price guide – most core and capacity building supports can claim) the following rules apply for charging for labour costs:

- You can charge for the time spent traveling to a participant up to a maximum of 30 minutes for MMM1-3 areas (or 60 minutes for MMM4-5 areas).
- The charge is at the hourly rate for the service, and can be recorded against that item number using the 'provider travel' code (e.g., driving for 15 minutes to deliver one hour of support coordination would cost the participant \$100.14 (the support) + \$25.03 (15 mins traveling at an hourly rate of 100.14 (100.14/4)).
- Only providers of capacity building supports may charge for the time spent travelling *back* from the last participant of the day (using the same travel caps).

See the price guide for more examples.

## Remote and very remote provider travel

If local providers are not available, the NDIA may enter into arrangements (and at times contracts) with specific providers for provision of services to more remote regions. The contract with a service provider will specify the cost of travel and any other associated expenses in these areas.



## Sources

This is general advice prepared based on the NDIS price guide 2020-21 available at 1 July 2020, which you can download on the [NDIS price guides and pricing page of their website](#).

If you have questions about claiming travel in different circumstances or need clarification about any of the information provided, contact the NDIA. Please be aware that the NDIS is a very individualised scheme and what you can claim may differ from participant to participant, or over time.

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## Attachment 1. NDIS provider travel costs flowchart

