



Villamanta
DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGAL SERVICE

Easy Read Submissions to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing on

Getting it Right: A New Definition for NDIS Providers

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PO Box 7328
GEELONG WEST VIC 3218

ABN 32 690988 235

📞 Information:
📞 Admin:
✉ Email:
🌐 Website:

1800 014 111
03 5260 1845
legal@villamanta.org.au
www.villamanta.org.au

Contents

About this document.....	1
What is happening?.....	2
Villamanta's main message	3
Why is Villamanta concerned?	4
What We Say	5
Self-direction	6
Important questions.....	7
Registration levels	8
More information is needed	9
Advanced registration.....	10
General registration.....	11
Villamanta's concern	12
Self-directed supports.....	13
Basic registration.....	14
Impact on small providers.....	15
Choice and control	16

Getting it Right: A New Definition for NDIS Providers

What Villamanta wants	17
Final message	18

About this document

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service wrote this discussion paper.

We help people with disability understand and protect their rights

This is an Easy Read version of our submission.

The submission is about proposed changes to NDIS provider registration.

Provider registration means the rules providers must follow to work in the NDIS.

What is happening?

The Australian Government is looking at changing the way NDIS providers are registered.

We refer to the Australian Government as **the Government** in this paper.

The Government released a consultation paper called:

Getting it Right: A New Definition for NDIS Providers.

The Government asked people and organisations to give feedback.

Villamanta's main message

A consultation is when the Government asks people what they think about proposed changes.

We are concerned that important information is missing from the consultation.

Without this information, it is difficult for people to understand the effects of the proposed changes.

The Government should provide enough information so people can give informed feedback.

Why is Villamanta concerned?

People in the disability community have already spent a lot of time giving feedback on:

- provider registration
- worker registration
- self-directed supports.

The Government has not yet responded to feedback about self-directed supports.

But it is asking people to provide more feedback on provider registration.

What We Say

The consultation process should happen in stages.

The Government should:

1. make decisions about earlier consultations
2. publish those decisions
3. then ask for feedback about the next stage.

Self-direction

One of the most important recommendations from the NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce was about self-direction.

In this paper we refer to the Worker Registration Taskforce as **the Taskforce**.

Self-direction means a participant chooses and manages their own supports.

Some people who self-direct may choose to use unregistered providers.

The consultation paper says the Government is still considering self-direction.

But it does not explain what the final decision will be.

We say this makes it difficult to understand the proposed changes.

Important questions

Without knowing what will happen with self-direction, people cannot know:

- which participants will be affected
- which providers will be affected
- which providers may be exempt
- what risks participants could face.

The answer to these questions may change how people feel about provider registration.

It may also change what safeguards are needed to keep participants safe.

Registration levels

The consultation paper talks about different levels of registration.

There are 4 levels:

- Advanced registration
- General registration
- Basic registration
- Purchase viability.

More information is needed

The consultation paper does not clearly explain:

- what providers must do at each level
- how much registration will cost
- what systems providers need
- how each level helps participants.

This is important because different registration levels may affect:

- participants
- sole traders
- small businesses
- large organisations.

People need to understand these impacts before giving feedback.

Advanced registration

Advanced registration would apply to providers who deliver high-risk supports.

Examples may include:

- group homes
- formal residential settings
- supports where participants may be more vulnerable.

We say there are only small changes in this category compared with the Taskforce recommendations.

General registration

General registration would apply to providers delivering medium-risk supports.

Examples may include:

- high-intensity supports
- complex personal care
- supports involving a lot of one-to-one contact.

Villamanta's concern

The proposed definition may include more supports than originally recommended by the Taskforce.

This may affect supports delivered:

- in the community
- in private homes.

Self-directed supports

The Taskforce recommended a separate registration category for self-directed supports.

This category included participants who manage and direct their own supports.

We note that the consultation paper does not clearly include this category.

This creates uncertainty about where self-directed supports fit in the new system.

Basic registration

Basic registration would apply to lower-risk supports.

Examples include:

- some sole traders
- social activities
- community participation supports.

We are concerned that some supports previously expected to be in Basic registration may move into General registration.

This could result in more requirements for providers.

Impact on small providers

Villamanta is worried that some small providers could struggle with increased registration requirements.

This may affect:

- sole traders
- independent support workers
- small businesses.

We say many small providers:

- are highly valued by participants
- offer flexible support
- provide choice
- can be more affordable
- provide employment opportunities for women.

Choice and control

Choice and control are important parts of the NDIS.

Participants should have options about who provides their supports.

We are concerned that some proposed changes could reduce the number of available providers.

What Villamanta wants

We want the Government to:

- explain the self-direction decision
- provide more information about registration levels
- consult in a logical order
- consider the impact on participants
- protect participant choice and control.

Final message

We believe it is too early to make decisions about the new definition of NDIS providers.

Important information is still missing.

The Government should provide that information before asking the disability community for further feedback.

This will help make sure changes are:

- fair
- transparent
- easy to understand
- good for participants.