



Villamanta
DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGAL SERVICE

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

on

New Framework Planning Rules and NDIS Supports

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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

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About Villamanta

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service (**We**) help people with disability understand their rights and get legal help. They have been doing this work since 1990.

We want:

- people with disability to have equal rights
- people to get support when they need it
- laws and services to be fair and accessible.

About this document

This document is an Easy Read version on our submission about proposed changes to the NDIS.

We may refer to the Australian Government as **the Government** in this document.

Main message

We are worried about the proposed NDIS changes.

We say people with disability have not been given enough information about the changes

We believe the Government should:

- share more information
- stop the current consultation process
- work together with people with disability to design the changes.

Support Needs Assessments

The Government wants to use a new **Support Needs Assessment**.

A **Support Needs Assessment** is a tool that helps to decide what support a person may need.

Villamanta's Concern

The assessment tool has not been released publicly.

Because people cannot see the tool, they cannot know:

- how it works
- whether it is fair
- whether it works well for different disabilities
- whether it is safe for all groups of people.

These groups include:

- First Nations people
- People from culturally diverse background
- LGBTQIA+ people
- People in rural and remote areas.

LGBTQIA+ is a short word to describe people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, or sex characteristics.

Important

People should not be assessed by a tool that has not been tested

People may need support during assessments

Some people may find it hard to explain their support needs.

This can happen because:

- They have a cognitive disability
- They do not realise how much support they need
- They have communication difficulties

If people do not get support during assessments, the assessment may not show their real needs.

We want:

- Advocates to be involved
- Health professionals to be heard
- Safeguards for people who attend assessments alone.

Budget rules

The government plans to introduce new budget rules.

Budget rules would help decide how much funding people receive.

Villamanta's concern

The actual rules have not been released publicly.

We say that people cannot give informed feedback if they cannot see the rules.

Consultation and co-design

Consultation means asking people for their reviews.

Co-design means working together with people from the beginning.

We say these changes have not been co-designed with the disability community.

We believe people with disability should help create policies that affect them.

Plan changes and reassessments

Sometimes people need to ask for changes to their NDIS plan.

The proposed rules say only certain people can request plan changes.

Villamanta's concern

Not everyone has a nominee who can help them.

Some people may have nobody to make requests on their behalf.

We want a better process to protect people who may be at risk.

We recommend working with:

- Disability advocacy organisations
- Support helplines
- Disability peak bodies.

NDIS support rules

NDIS support rules help decide what supports can be funded.

Villamanta's concerns

Many participants do not understand the current rules.

Some NDIS planners are using the support rules to make unlawful decisions about funding.

We say the rules:

- Can be difficult to understand
- Can stop people using creative solutions
- Can reduce choice and control

Some people are unable to use their funding in ways that would work better for them.

Recommendation

We believe the support rules should be redesigned with people with disability involved from the start.

Advocacy and safeguards

Advocacy is when someone helps a person speak up and understand their rights.

We say many people need advocacy support.

We report that they can currently help only a small number of people who ask for assistance with NDIS appeals.

We want:

More funding for advocacy services.

Better support for people who:

- find the NDIS difficult to understand
- need help with decisions
- rely on supports to stay safe and well.

Easy Read Submissions on NDIS New Framework Planning and Support Rules

Summary

We support improving the NDIS.

However, we believe:

- more information should be released
- people with disability should help design the new system
- Assessments and rules should be tested and shown to the community
- Advocacy and safeguards should be strengthened
- People should receive support to participate in decisions that affect their lives.