

NDIS REFORM 2026-2028

Sheet 1 • The Bigger Picture — Why the NDIS Is Changing

■ THE KEY MESSAGE

The NDIS is being repositioned as one part of a wider disability-support system — with the Scheme itself focused more specifically on people with permanent and significant disability. Having a genuine disability-related support need is not the same as meeting NDIS eligibility. Changing the Scheme's boundary does not make those needs disappear — it just changes which system is meant to respond.

■ WHY THE NDIS IS CHANGING

- Scheme sustainability & expenditure growth
- Fraud and non-compliance
- Provider and market reform
- Clearer eligibility requirements
- Development of supports outside the NDIS

■ WHAT DOESN'T CHANGE TODAY

- Existing plans continue as normal unless the NDIA advises otherwise
- Disability-related needs don't vanish just because a boundary moves
- Most reforms apply progressively — not all at once
- The practical test: is adequate, accessible support available on the other side of the boundary?

■ MASTER REFORM TIMELINE

Date	What happens
1 Oct 2026	Thriving Kids begins; some Social/Community & Daily Living budget changes start applying to new/reassessed plans
27 Nov 2026	Restrictions on provider kickbacks & inducements commence
Dec 2026	New 90-day claiming rule begins
1 Feb 2027	New reasonable & necessary criteria begin; plan rollovers replaced by renewals
1 Apr 2027	New framework planning & support needs assessments begin (progressive)
1 Jul 2027	Mandatory registration expands for higher-risk supports
1 Oct 2027	Move to a panel of approved plan-management providers
1 Jan 2028	New NDIS access & functional-capacity arrangements begin
1 Jul 2028	Commissioned Support Coordination & Connection service intended to replace current model
Through to 2030	Progressive transition of all participants to new framework planning

■ SIMPLE MESSAGE

"The government is changing how the NDIS fits alongside other supports. Most changes apply gradually, through new plans and reassessments — your current plan isn't automatically reduced just because a date passes."

NDIS ACCESS IS CHANGING

■ THE KEY MESSAGE

From **1 January 2028**, NDIS access moves progressively to a standardised, evidence-based **functional-capacity assessment**. Diagnosis remains important evidence, but the reforms place more weight on functional impact — so two people with the same diagnosis can get different access outcomes.

■ NEW FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY TEST

Considers a person's ability to do an activity:

- Without assistance, AT or modifications; or
- Using AT/modifications they'd ordinarily use
- With age-appropriate assistance, if a child
- Excluding, as far as possible, environmental & personal circumstances

■ FACTORS THAT AFFECT FUNCTION

- Sensory demands & communication access
- Executive-function demands, fatigue, stress
- Predictability & informal assistance
- Environmental accessibility
- Especially relevant for neurodevelopmental, psychosocial, cognitive & fluctuating disabilities

■ ACCESS vs PLANNING — NOT THE SAME QUESTION

1 ACCESS: Does this person meet NDIS eligibility requirements?

2 PLANNING: If they do, what disability-related support needs should their budget address? (A different, separate support-needs assessment.)

3 Permanence: where appropriate treatment exists, whether it's been undertaken can now be relevant to whether an impairment is judged permanent — but ongoing treatment to maintain function doesn't rule out permanence.

4 Other systems: access will interact more explicitly with workers' compensation and motor-vehicle schemes — the NDIS shouldn't automatically fund what another system is legally responsible for.

■ IMPORTANT CAUTION

Reduced visible distress, increased compliance or an ability to mask should **not** automatically be read as reduced support need. Being capable of an activity doesn't mean doing it consistently, safely or sustainably in daily life.

■ KEY DATE

1 January 2028 — new functional-capacity-based access arrangements begin. Current access rules apply until then.

REASONABLE & NECESSARY SUPPORTS + PLANS

■ THE KEY MESSAGE

From **1 February 2027**, new reasonable-and-necessary criteria start applying to new participants, then progressively to existing participants through reassessment. The same date, plan **rollovers end** — replaced by plan **renewals**.

■ WHAT THE NDIA WILL CONSIDER

- Disability-related support needs
- Scheme sustainability
- Equity between similar participants
- Responsibilities of other service systems
- Ordinary parental responsibilities
- Whether supports directly relate to the eligible impairment

■ ORDINARY PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Clearer guidance on what parents ordinarily provide:

- Supervision, personal care, transport
- Emotional support, behavioural support

This does **not** mean parents absorb the extra assistance a child needs specifically because of disability.

■ PLAN ACTION CHECKLIST

- 1 Requesting reassessment** — participants, nominees & child representatives can request one for a significant, ongoing change (functional capacity, living arrangements, education, employment, informal support). NDIA generally has 90 days to decide.
- 2 Variations still exist** — smaller, urgent or short-term changes go through a plan variation instead; it is not the same process as a reassessment.
- 3 Renewals replace rollovers** (from 1 Feb 2027) — when a plan hits its reassessment date it's reassessed or renewed under the new arrangements.
- 4 Unspent funding** won't automatically carry into a renewed plan — but this isn't a reason to spend unnecessarily; funds must still only be used for eligible supports.

■ SIMPLE MESSAGE FOR PARTICIPANTS

"A variation and a reassessment are different processes. Know which one fits your situation, and check your plan's scheduled reassessment date."

BUDGETS & NEW FRAMEWORK PLANNING

■ THE KEY MESSAGE

From **1 October 2026**, some Social, Economic & Community Participation and Improved Daily Living Skills budgets begin changing — but only as new plans, reassessments and renewals progressively apply it. From **1 April 2027**, participants progressively move to new framework plans (transition continues through to the end of 2030).

■ SUPPORT NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONSIDERS

- Functional capacity
- Life stage
- Disability-related support needs
- Relevant environmental factors

Rules can specify how assessments are done and what information can, must or must not be used.

■ SUPPORTS EXCLUDED FROM THE OCT 2026 CHANGES

- Employment supports
- Disability-related health supports
- High-intensity supports
- Intensive & complex behaviour supports

■ CONTINUOUS 24-HOUR SUPPORT

Additional protections apply for eligible participants needing continuous 24-hour disability-related care, including a specific plan-variation pathway to reconsider funding where necessary to maintain essential support.

■ REMEMBER

Budget changes don't mean every participant gets the same reduction on the same day — they're applied progressively, not on 1 October for everyone at once.

Date	What to remember
1 Oct 2026	Some SECP / Improved Daily Living budget changes begin (progressive)
1 Apr 2027	New framework planning begins for some participants
End of 2030	Expected completion of transition to new framework planning

COORDINATION, PLAN MANAGEMENT & PROVIDERS

■ THE KEY MESSAGE

Support Coordination as it currently works is **ending** — not immediately, but as one of the largest structural changes in the reform package. Plan management and provider registration are shifting in parallel.

■ PLAN MANAGEMENT — FROM 1 OCT 2027

NDIA moves to a **panel of approved** plan-management providers. If a participant's current plan manager isn't on the panel, transitional arrangements are intended to allow time to move.

■ SUPPORT COORDINATION — FROM 1 JUL 2028

Now: plan funding → participant chooses & purchases Support Coordination.

Proposed: NDIA commissions selected organisations → participant accesses coordination through that system.

Support Coordination is **not** ending now — keep using current funding as usual unless advised otherwise.

■ STILL BEING DESIGNED FOR SUPPORT COORDINATION

- Choice between commissioned providers & ability to change providers
- Continuity of existing relationships
- Conflicts of interest & independence
- Specialist, complex, culturally-specific & disability-specific expertise
- Regional & thin-market availability
- Complaints, accountability & the link to independent advocacy

■ PROVIDER REGISTRATION — FROM 1 JUL 2027

Mandatory registration expands for higher-risk supports: personal care, daily living support, supports in closed settings. Rolled out progressively, alongside broader provider-enrolment arrangements.

■ KICKBACKS — FROM 27 NOV 2026

Restrictions on provider kickbacks & inappropriate inducements begin, targeting incentives that could improperly influence participant choice.

CLAIMS, RECORDS, COMPLIANCE & PRICING

■ THE KEY MESSAGE

A set of administrative changes — claiming windows, record-keeping, information requests and pricing power — carry real practical consequences even though they get less attention than the bigger structural reforms.

■ RECORD-KEEPING PERIODS

- Participants — 3 years
- Nominees — 5 years
- Providers — 7 years

Keep invoices, receipts and evidence of how funds were used.

■ WHAT TO DO NOW

- Keep NDIA contact details current
- Respond to formal information requests promptly
- Document changes in functional capacity & support needs
- Retain relevant disability evidence

■ CHECKLIST — DON'T CONFUSE THESE

- 1 90-day claiming rule** (from Dec 2026) — claims generally must be submitted within 90 days of a support being delivered.
- 2 90-day reassessment period** — a separate rule: how long the NDIA generally has to decide on a requested unscheduled reassessment. Same number, different rule.
- 3 Plan suspension risk** — the NDIA can suspend a plan where required information isn't provided despite repeated reasonable contact attempts.
- 4 Automated administration** — some claims/payment processes can be automated; complex or discretionary decisions are meant to stay with human decision-makers.

■ PRICING POWER SHIFTS

The Minister now holds powers over maximum pricing determinations, informed by NDIA analysis. This changes the framework for pricing decisions — it doesn't mean every price changed when the legislation passed.

■ THE BROADER MARKET SHIFT

Mandatory registration + provider enrolment + commissioned panels + stronger payment controls + ministerial pricing = a gradual move away from a fully open NDIS market.

THRIVING KIDS & FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORTS

■ THE KEY MESSAGE

Thriving Kids is the **first phase** of the new Foundational Supports system, phasing in from **1 October 2026**. It's aimed at children aged **8 and under** with developmental delay and/or autism with low-to-moderate support needs, plus their families, carers and kin.

October does **not** mean every autistic child leaves the NDIS. New access arrangements only begin 1 January 2028, and children who meet functional-capacity and significant-disability requirements may continue to qualify.

■ THRIVING KIDS SUPPORTS INCLUDE

- Developmental & health checks
- Family & parenting support
- Navigation of the system
- Targeted developmental support
- Connection with local services
- Community & workforce capacity-building

■ WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AGE 8?

Needs don't necessarily shrink as kids grow — disability can become more apparent as:

- Academic & executive-function demands rise
- Social environments get more complex
- Puberty, sensory & emotional demands shift
- Independence & transition-to-work/study expectations increase

Pathways for ages 9+ are still being developed.

■ FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORTS — QUICK FACTS

- Delivered **outside** individual NDIS plans, jointly funded by Commonwealth, state & territory governments
- **General** supports: accessible info, peer support, community connection, navigation, skill-building, inclusive-community capacity
- **Targeted** supports: for people with disability-related needs who don't require individualised NDIS-level assistance
- Delivered via community organisations, mainstream services, commissioned or group programs — **not** automatically an equivalent individual funding package

WILL SUPPORT ACTUALLY EXIST?

■ THE KEY MESSAGE

An announced reform is not an operating service. A consultation is not a final policy. A referral pathway does not guarantee support is actually available — three things worth holding apart as this rolls out.

■ WHAT TO WATCH

- **Additionality** — is capacity genuinely new, or just existing services rebadged?
- **Regional availability** — does the service exist where the person actually lives, not just "nationally"?
- **Mainstream capacity** — do health, education & community systems get real extra funding, workforce & expertise?

■ SUPPORT ISN'T JUST THERAPY

- Allied health, communication support & AAC
- Assistive technology & environmental modification
- Peer support, mentoring, family support
- Community participation, education & employment support
- Navigation & self-advocacy

Sometimes the right intervention changes the environment, not the person.

■ THREE PRACTICAL TESTS FOR ANY REFORM

1 Is support available? Does it actually exist where the person lives?

2 Is it adequate? Does it meet the person's actual disability-related needs?

3 Who is accountable when a service is unavailable, inaccessible, inappropriate or insufficient?

■ INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES FUND

A \$200 million fund intended to strengthen community organisations' capacity to provide inclusive participation — relevant as support shifts toward mainstream and community options.

■ CONFIRMED vs STILL BEING DESIGNED

Legislated: functional capacity, access & permanence, R&N supports, reassessments, renewals, framework planning, claiming, record-keeping, provider regulation, plan management, pricing, SC reform direction.

Still developing: assessment methodology & thresholds, targeted Foundational Supports beyond Thriving Kids, SC & Connection detail, regional delivery models.

■ SIMPLE MESSAGE FOR PARTICIPANTS & FAMILIES

"Keep using your current plan unless the NDIA tells you otherwise. Keep your invoices, receipts and evidence. Keep your contact details current. Know your plan's end date — and check any claim about NDIS changes against current official information."

Series based on NDIS & Foundational Supports reform information current as at the source material provided · For general awareness only — verify against official NDIS/NDIA guidance for specific cases.