



## NDIS Draft List of Supports Survey Response from MS Australia

1. *Do you think the draft list of NDIS Supports covers the kinds of disability supports you think should be included?* No

2. *If not, what changes would you suggest?*

- **Air conditioning:** Approximately 60–80% of people living with MS suffer temperature sensitivity and struggle to regulate their body temperature. Access to an air conditioner is the best way to manage this. It is not clear if air conditioning is included under Home Modifications in the current draft list. Further information on the use of air conditioning as an NDIS support can be found in a 2019 [AAT case](#)
- **Employment services:** There is inconsistency in the draft list relating to employment services and it is unclear what is provided. Especially under 'Assistance to Access and Maintain Employment or high education' where it states this does not include '*provision of employment services and programs*'.
- **Assistive Technology:** the assistive technology supports should allow for any new and emerging technologies that may become available in this space. This could include devices that support cognitive function and help people maintain independence.
- **Mental Health:** There is very limited detail on what psychosocial supports are provided in this new list with only a reference to a carve out for 'ongoing psychosocial recovery supports. Many people living with MS experience anxiety and depression and rely on NDIS supports for assistance with this. The list should be clearer on what supports are available under this category and consider how to provide a more holistic approach to the delivery of mental health and disability supports.

3. *Are there goods or service on the exclusion list that you think shouldn't be there?* Yes

4. *If yes, please list in order of importance*

- **Smart watches:** Smart watches now include excellent falls detection abilities and are of great benefit to anyone at risk of falling. They can also increase independence and provide useful alerts to family and carers and should be allowed as a support on a case-by-case basis.
- **General home repairs, general renovations and maintenance:** Some people with disability may need assistance with home maintenance such as cleaning gutters and windows and would benefit from these supports. The provision of these supports would increase independence and allow more people to stay living in their homes.

- **Beauty services:** There are instances where access to beauty services can benefit people living with disability, especially those with issues relating to movement such as ataxia, balance and walking and grip. Services that could help include hairdressing to support maintenance and cleaning of hair and beauty salon for essential nail care.
- **Additional living costs** – there is no clear guidance on what will be allowed under this carve out but we recommend considering the high costs of electricity for people living with MS. The need to run air-conditioning continuously can result in electricity bills that are 4-5 times higher than the average household and inability to run it could lead to exacerbated symptoms, increased stress and anxiety and MS relapses.
- **Membership/entry fees:** For people with disability living in regional and remote areas, access to physical therapies and activities can be limited and maybe only be accessed at a community hall, gym or pool which requires an entry or membership fee. There should be some allowance for the payment of these fees.
- **Household Items:** The list is unclear on whether people will be able to access modified household items. For people with physical disabilities access to modified household items is essential

*5. Do you have any further feedback or concerns with the draft NDIS supports list?*

We recognise that the introduction of a list of NDIS supports that are included and excluded can improve the understanding of what the NDIS offers and what participants are eligible for. However, the current list of exclusions appears to have been drafted on the basis of how NDIS supports are viewed externally by the media and general public. They are not driven by what can benefit people living with disability or best practice disability supports.

There are some supports that can automatically be excepted such as unlawful goods and services and alternative therapies. However, there are many supports that would be better approached on a case-by-case basis rather than being excluded. For example, smart watches are not essential for many NDIS participants, but provide essential fall detection support for those at risk of falling. Improved training for NDIS planners and assessors and more research/exploration of evidence-based disability supports would greatly improve understanding of disability supports. This could also be supported by a greater recognition of reports and feedback provided by health and medical professionals when people apply for the NDIS or seek a plan change.

**Please note:** these responses were edited due to the maximum 250 word/1600-character limit on each question in the survey response form. The full responses were provided to the NDIA via the Neurodegenerative, Palliative Care and Rare Conditions Advisory Group (NPRAG) Working Group.