



Office: G04, 120 Eastern Valley Way, Belconnen.  
Phone: 02 8004 8412

## DAACCS LATEST NEWS

August/September 2022

[www.daaccs.com.au](http://www.daaccs.com.au)

[Disability Aging And Community Care Services |](#)

[Facebook](#)

### Did you know?

Spring: "a lovely reminder of how beautiful change can truly be." — Anonymous

DAACCS has acquired a 'mini' farm, we have been working nonstop to redesign the homestead and surrounds to be accessible and ready to welcome our DAACCS participants for days out at the farm, Overnight stays, or quick visits to pat the alpacas or pick the fresh fruit from the trees.

DAACCS also has a side-by-side where participants can go for a drive and explore the property.

Stay tuned for more updates on when we are ready to welcome guests.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has reached a significant milestone, with the latest data in the NDIS Quarterly Report showing over 530,000 participants are now receiving individualised funding packages for disability-related supports.

Of the new participants who joined:

- 44% (8,419) were children, meaning there are now 82,863 NDIS participants aged under 7 in the Scheme.
- 9.1% (1,762) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, meaning there are now 38,846 participants representing this cohort in the Scheme.
- 9.3% (1,792) identified as being from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community, meaning there are now 49,201 participants representing this cohort in the Scheme.

For more ACT specific statistics please visit [QR\\_Q4 202122 ACT Dashboard PDF.pdf](#)

### COVID-19

ACT Covid statistics case numbers from January 2022 to 17 August 2022

Belconnen 43,803  
 Canberra East 425  
 Gungahlin 38,268  
 Molonglo 5,460  
 North Canberra 25,600  
 South Canberra 12,380  
 Tuggeranong 37,556  
 Urriarra - Namadgi 219  
 Weston Creek 10,089  
 Woden Valley 16,066  
 Address not available 1,305  
 Other 2,791  
 Total **193,962**

There were 4,096 cases not included in the figure due to incomplete or inaccurate address data reported to ACT Health and/or residential address being outside the ACT.

Statistics provided by ACT Health

[www.covid19.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/2060255/Weekly-epidemiological-update](http://www.covid19.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/2060255/Weekly-epidemiological-update)



Fun Fact: The first day of spring is called the vernal equinox. The term vernal is Latin for "spring" and equinox is Latin for "equal night."



## LATEST NDIS NEWS

### New Information and Communication Technology for NDIS

The NDIA is designing and building a new ICT business system named PACE. PACE will eventually replace the current business system, portal and payment systems.

PACE is being designed to be more user-friendly and make it easier for NDIA staff and partners to do their job, giving them more time to deliver a quality experience for participants and providers.

The design and build of PACE were strongly influenced by NDIA's ongoing consultation with participants, NDIS staff, partners, and providers.

It has also been influenced by the outcomes of prior consultation with participants.

NDIA staff have now started testing features of the PACE system. This process will continue over the coming months.

In addition, NDIA has started planning for a real-time test of the PACE system. They expect to start real-time testing in Tasmania by the end of 2022.

The real-time test will involve our NDIA and Partners in the Community staff using the new system with current and prospective participants, providers, and the wider disability community.

Participants and providers will be supported by NDIA staff and Partners in the Community through every step as they test the PACE system.

NDIA will be able to update and improve the PACE system based on the experience and feedback received during User Acceptance Testing, ongoing consultation and engagement, and the testing in Tasmania

This will make sure PACE works as designed, training and support is appropriate, and the new system delivers an improved participant experience.

NDIA assures the national rollout of the new system is fit for purpose and incorporates feedback from everyone who engages with us, our partners, and the Scheme.

NDIA will continue to engage stakeholders as they develop their plans for Tasmania and be deeply involved in guiding and advising the NDIA in our national rollout approach



Use it or lose it' – getting NDIS funding is only half the battle for participants

['Use it or lose it' – getting NDIS funding is only half the battle for participants \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/use-it-or-lose-it-getting-ndis-funding-is-only-half-the-battle-for-participants-2017-08)

Around 4.5 million Australians live with disability but less than 13% of them are covered by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Getting into the scheme is one thing. But many NDIS participants find using their funding is yet another.

Our research indicates a major issue in terms of the fairness of the scheme is less in the allocation of funding but more about whether people are able to spend their funding.

Some groups – particularly people living in regional or remote areas or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – are less able to use their budgets. But there are ways to make the NDIS more equitable.

### **Using an NDIS plan**

When accepted onto the NDIS, participants develop a plan that sets out the goals they want to work towards, and the support needed to achieve them. This comes with an associated budget to spend on different supports. Most plans last around 12 months before they are reviewed, but they can last as long as three years in some cases.

If the funding associated with a plan is not all spent, the funds don't roll over into the next plan and are returned to the scheme.

At a subsequent review, there will be a discussion about why the funds weren't used. If a person consistently doesn't use all their funds, they might find future budgets are reduced.

Given the widely reported cuts to NDIS plans, some participants are concerned that under-spending might lead to future plan cuts.

### **Why people don't spend their allocation**

There are a range of reasons why people don't manage to use all their budget allocations.

The NDIS is complex to navigate, and people may not fully understand their plan or the system. There might not be the providers available to meet a person's needs or it might be difficult to find and secure appropriate providers. Similar schemes overseas show people are unlikely to use their entire budgets – they might hold some portion back "for a rainy day" or their needs might change or not eventuate as anticipated.

It proposed to reform the scheme by introducing Independent Assessments, which it argued would produce fairer plan amounts by assessing each participant using the same suite of functional assessment tools. But this proposed reform was dropped after backlash from the disability community who believed the tools would not produce the intended effects and that this might be an attempt to cut scheme costs.

The previous federal government argued the NDIS was inequitable, suggesting those in richer areas were receiving larger budgets than those in poorer areas.

## Tracking under-use

One way to measure the under-use of NDIS funding is to explore the utilisation rate. This refers to a comparison of the dollar value of individual budgets against the overall amount expended on supports.

Latest [NDIS data](#) shows the national average utilisation rate is 75%.

This measure is only an average, and there are many participants with very low utilisation – 32% of participants spend less than 50% of their budgets. People in some areas spend less than others. For example, East Arnhem in the Northern Territory has an average utilisation rate of 47%.

We also see the variation in utilisation within budgets. NDIS plans contain three different categories of funding: core supports for everyday activities, capacity building supports to help build independence and skills, and capital supports to purchase equipment and home or vehicle modifications.

While the national average utilisation rate for core supports is 81%, the capacity building stands at [59%](#) and [capital at 56%](#). Many people have reported challenges in getting home modifications and high-cost equipment approved even when these are in their plans.

## Some groups use more than others

As part of ongoing research, [we compared](#) groups of NDIS participants to better understand differences in plan allocation and spending. We focused on groups more likely to face inequity in utilisation and where wider social inequities are present.

We looked at plan size and spending separately. We did this because an increase in utilisation could occur if plans are reduced but spending remains the same.

We compared plan size and spending for participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and according to where people live. We considered factors such as age to ensure comparisons were “like with like”.

We found participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people received larger plans than other NDIS participants. But they spent a similar amount, despite having bigger budgets. This resulted in lower levels of utilisation.

Inequities also vary by disability group. We found spending and utilisation were low across the board for people with psychosocial disabilities (such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and social anxiety disorders).

In a [study](#) of Victorian NDIS data, we found participants living in regional and remote areas receive less funding. They also spend less of their allocated funding compared to people who live in large urban centers. Some of this may be due to challenges of “thin markets”, where insufficient providers are available in an area.

## What can be done?

One of the [election commitments](#) of the Labor government was to increase the number of providers in regional areas. This would address “[thin markets](#)” – where there is a gap between participant needs and their use of funded supports. But it should be done in a meaningful way so providers and services are appropriate to their local communities.

Another way to help participants access services is to increase the use of NDIS support coordinators. These workers who are funded via the person’s plan can help participants connect with NDIS providers and understand the scheme. This can act as an additional source of help to be able to find suitable providers and to be able to use their plans in buying services.

Our [modeling](#) shows increasing the use of support coordinators could increase plan utilisation and reduce inequities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse participants, people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and those with psychosocial disabilities.



## Meet our team

**Rabeh**

**Support Worker**



*"Who you are tomorrow begins with what you do today"*

What is a fun or interesting fact about your hometown?

Sydney, great variety of food, multicultural city



What are three items you'd take with you to a deserted island?

Utility knife, flint and clean underwear



If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Spagetti boll everyday!!

If you could change something in the world, what would it be?

More tolerance and acceptance in the world



What is your favourite thing to do when you're not working?

Going for walks with my family and dog, no mobiles just walk and enjoy each other.

What is your favourite song from your teenage years that you still rock out to when nobody else is listening?

Black Sabath, War Pigs

If you were a Disney character, who would you be?

Aladdins Genie so I can grant 3 wishes  
Wish 1: Grant tolerance to the world.  
Wish 2: Teach Canberran's how to drive properly.  
Wish 3: To remove psycoosis, depression and anxiety from the world.



What do you like best about working at DAACCS?

I like the acceptance, the people, the structure the effeciency of how everything works, assistance is always there if you need it, if I have any questions I can pick up the phone and get an answer any time. DAACCS is an amazing place to work.