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DAACCS LATEST NEWS

March 2024

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1st March 2024 is United Nations Zero Discrimination Day

Every year on 1st March, Zero Discrimination Day celebrates the right of everyone to live their life with dignity, including living a full and productive life. The day also highlights inclusion, compassion, and becoming a movement for change to end all forms of discrimination.

Enlighten Festival 1-11 March 2024

[Accessibility - Enlighten Festival \(enlightencanberra.com\)](#)

Enjoy awe inspiring art, delicious food, captivating entertainment, film, music and much more as Enlighten Festival returns to Canberra from 1 -11 March 2024!

The Canberra Balloon Spectacular also returns from 9-17 March, filling Canberra's skies with colour each morning.



St Patrick's Day Sunday 17th March 2024

[St Patrick's Day Canberra 2024 events and ideas \(stpatricksday.com.au\)](#)

St. Patrick's Day marks the festive celebration of St. Patrick, the beloved patron saint of Ireland. Initially, the holiday was all about religious observances, but over time, it evolved into a secular tribute to Irish culture, especially after Irish immigrants brought their celebrations to the United States. This happened as early as 1762, which also marked the first year of the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City. Get out and about around Lake Burley Griffin and in the City Centre and maybe a progressive tasting of things Irish on the day of Green!



Fun Fact: March's full Moon, the Worm Moon, reaches peak illumination on the morning of Monday, 25th March. Look for it on the evening of Sunday 24th March, as the moon rises above the horizon!



LATEST NDIS NEWS

More NDIS participants and families and carers in work, new data reveals

The NDIS continues to have a positive impact on the lives of participants, their families and carers with recent data highlighting improvements in areas such as employment and community participation.

The NDIS is now supporting more than 646,000 participants, with outcome data in the latest Quarterly Report showing the Scheme is making a significant positive impact on people's lives.

Key highlights from the latest Quarterly Report include:

- Participation in work has more than doubled from 10% to 22% for participants aged 15 to 24.
- Half of all parents and carers are now reporting paid employment, reaching the 2023-24 target of 50%. This is a relative increase of 10%.
- 41% of participants aged 15 years and older reported increased participation in community and social activities – a relative increase of 19%.
- Over three quarters of all participants aged over 15 years reported greater choice and control in their lives, exceeding the 2023-24 target.

NDIA CEO Rebecca Falkingham said the latest data shows the Scheme is changing many people's lives for the better.

"Measuring participant outcomes is vitally important to gauge how the Scheme is doing, and this quarter illustrates fantastic improvements in key areas such as employment for participants and family members and increased participation in our community," Ms Falkingham said.

"However, there is much work to be done to continue to improve the Scheme for people with disability while ensuring it is enduring following the release of the NDIS Review and Disability Royal Commission last year."

The Agency is progressing a range of the 2023–24 Budget initiatives aimed to deliver improved participant outcomes and the effective and sustainable operation of the Scheme.

"Through co-design, we are implementing improvements to the participant planning process, and improving consistency in home and living eligibility decision for participants with complex and high support needs, which are expected to assist in addressing key risks to Scheme financial sustainability."

"Together with government, the NDIA is also carefully considering all NDIS Review recommendations with reforms to be guided by good plans for implementation – developed in partnership with people with disability and the disability community."

"The NDIA will continue to work with the disability community over the coming months as we collaborate with them to make the NDIS stronger for participants and their families."

[More NDIS participants and families and carers in work, new data reveals | NDIS](#)

[PB Quarterly report to disability ministers Q2 2023-24 Summary Part A Accessible.pdf](#)



Reinforcing a sustainable, honest, and trustworthy NDIS

The Australian Government will provide initial funding of \$83.9 million to strengthen the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and make sure every dollar is going to participants who need it.

The new funding will go towards the Crack Down on Fraud program and will boost fraud-detecting IT systems to better protect monies allocated to Australians living with disability who are on the NDIS.

The National Disability Insurance Agency will use the funding for a number of fraud-busting IT activities, including:

- building a new fraud case management system that will interact with other enforcement agencies;
- building new IT systems to connect with other agencies, providers and banks so that transactions can be actioned faster with reduced errors;
- improving the systems that assess, process and pay over 400,000 NDIS claims per day;
- improving identity proofing systems to increase safety and privacy; and
- improving the NDIS mobile app and online interfaces.

The program and the funding will also help safeguard the sustainability of the Scheme, and ensuring that legitimate participants continue to have access to supports and services they need to thrive.

This investment will complement the work of the Fraud Fusion Taskforce and has been designed to respond to areas of vulnerability that have been identified by the intelligence and analytics obtained by the Taskforce since it commenced in November 2022.

Minister for the NDIS Bill Shorten MP said the new program reflects the Government's commitment to get the NDIS back on track and restore Australia's trust in the scheme's ability to meet the needs of participants now and into the future.

"The Crack Down on Fraud program includes a number of ICT improvements that will be implemented progressively and are designed to make it easier to get it right, and harder to get it wrong for everyone engaging with the scheme" Minister Shorten said.

"This investment is not only about catching criminals who may target Australians living with disability, but also enhancing the systems we have in place to detect and prevent fraud and non-compliant activity."



“The Crack Down on Fraud program represents significant further progress in safeguarding the Scheme’s integrity, and will not only optimise NDIS resources, but will also ensure that honest participants who depend on the Scheme can be better supported into the future.”

The Government recognises that stakeholder collaboration lies at the heart of responsive policy, and will ensure the voices and perspectives of NDIS participants, their carers and families, and those in the disability sector inform the new program’s design.

“We have already started consulting with the disability community and will continue to do so, to ensure that participants are fully supported in transitioning to the improved systems”, Minister Shorten said.

“One of the key Independent NDIS Review observations was concerns around integrity of the scheme. This is a critical area of reform because it’s our fellow Australians with a disability who suffer most from any fraud and exploitation in the NDIS.”

The NDIS review recommended that the Australian Government invest in the underpinning digital infrastructure and capability needed to protect the integrity of the NDIS.

“This investment is another step in the right direction in protecting the Scheme’s integrity and sustainability, and ensuring the NDIS reaches its full potential,” Minister Shorten said.

[Reinforcing a sustainable, honest, and trustworthy NDIS | NDIS](#)