



UPDATE MARCH 2026

Access Denied: Psychosocial Disability and the NDIS

The *Access Denied* report identifies how the NDIS is failing people with psychosocial disability at a time where there is significant unmet need for psychosocial support right across Australia.

Since the release of *Access Denied* we are seeing signs that our collective voice is being heard. The Health and Mental Health Minister’s February [joint communique](#) noted the access issues and accompanying calls to improve this. We are also pleased to see the rate of access to the NDIS increasing slightly (from 29% to 33% from the last quarter). There is momentum, but more work to do.

Psychosocial support for people with mental health issues assists people with everyday living support, health and wellbeing, relationships and connections with community, education and employment.

Access Denied recommendations called for the establishment of a NDIS psychosocial pathway, and for psychosocial disability expertise to be embedded within all levels of NDIA’s operations and decision making.

This newsletter is a forum to report on advocacy to promote a fairer and more responsive NDIS for people with psychosocial disability.

Data update: psychosocial disability and the NDIS ¹

65,827	Have active plans
5,000	People with psychosocial disability originally estimated to be in the NDIS but are not currently getting support (using original Productivity Commission methodology)
2,088	People with a psychosocial disability applied for access; 375 less than the same time last year
33%	Of people with a psychosocial disability who applied received access, compared to 79% for all other disabilities. This is up 4 percentage points from the last quarter.

¹ NDIS Quarterly report to disability ministers, Supplement E, 2025-2026, Q2

Changes to registration

Provider registration is an important safeguard for people with psychosocial disability. Mandatory registration will commence for Supported Independent Living (SIL) and platform providers from 1 July 2026.

However, this important safeguard will not be enough to protect people with a psychosocial disability, many of whom do not qualify for SIL but who use their funding to purchase 24 hour housing and support. This increases the risk of being actively targeted by substandard providers unable to meet registration requirements.

Additionally, very quietly the NDIA has paused mandatory registration of support coordinators.

Market threats and pricing

The NDIA is taking too long to address known market concerns and is not using the information it already has or held by others, such as IHACPA², to drive improvements. We are not confident that the three-year pricing workplan, can or will deliver.

Last year, following a consultation, IHACPA reported that the NDIS pricing model is causing big ripples, in unintended ways, for participants, providers and the disability sector. It confirmed that pricing does not reflect the true costs of delivering services, especially in remote areas, or for people with complex disabilities.

In response to the recent NDIA consultation on pricing, the APA has renewed calls for an independent body, such as IHACPA to recommend consistent pricing across sectors.

New Planning Framework Rules

The consultation on the new planning framework rules is underway. There is a lack of detail about what is being proposed, including how assessors and delegates will have the psychosocial expertise and assessment capability required, what is in the “personal and environment” tool and how or if it, or the iCAN, are validated for people with psychosocial disability. There are likewise real concerns about the lack of options for independent review of NDIA decisions.

“Many people, and particularly those living with significant mental illness, will have challenges articulating what supports they need. For some people, admitting struggles in the past has meant a hospital admission. It means they can be very reluctant to share accurate reflections of areas they need support..... it is very non trauma informed to expect people who have experienced great harm from the system to tell strangers who they have just met all the things they are having trouble with” - Mind intake worker commenting on the new planning framework rules.

We call on upon the NDIA to ensure there is a specialist psychosocial planning and assessment approach from notification to plan completion, ensuring a positive and valuable experience. People with psychosocial disability in the scheme need to be assured that they are working with someone who understands their needs, has the skills to ask them and their support network for the right information, and offer a trauma informed, recovery based and place-based approach.

The NDIS Review identified the need for a psychosocial pathway. A specialist planning approach is key to achieving this.

Government response so far

The Health and Mental Health Ministers [joint communique](#) also noted that the next stage of work on Foundational Supports will include psychosocial supports. The APA welcomes this commitment but urges this work is given priority.

Keep the momentum going

- Read [Access Denied](#)³.
- Keep psychosocial disability front of mind.
- Share this newsletter.
- Raise issues with Health and Disability Ministers.
- Contact us with any questions or suggestions. Email at connect@psychosocialalliance.org.au.



² Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority, [NDIS pricing reform opportunities what we've heard | Media | IHACPA](#)

³ For more information: psychosocialalliance.org.au