Reasonable and Necessary

The NDIS takes a very individualised approach to determining what types of supports can be funded in a person's plan. Understanding how the NDIS makes funding decisions is critical knowledge, as it means you'll understand what types of supports might be available and how to prepare for planning and review meetings.

The NDIS won't fund supports that …

- ✖ Are not related to the participant's disability
- ✖ Are a day-to-day living cost
- ✖ Are likely to cause harm
- ✖ Are Illegal
- ✖ Duplicate other supports in the person's NDIS plan.

Source: 5.1 – 5.3 Supports for Participants Rules

The NDIS will fund supports that…

- ✓ Assist the person to pursue goals and aspirations
- ✓ Facilitate social and economic participation
- ✓ Represent value for money relative to alternatives
- ✓ Are likely to be effective and beneficial having regard to good practice
- ✓ Take account of what it is reasonable to expect families, carers, informal networks and the community to provide
- ✓ Are most appropriately funded or provided through the NDIS

Source: 'Reasonable and Necessary Criteria' – Section 34 of the NDIS Act

The NDIS is individualised

The golden rule is that the NDIS is individualised. This means that something considered to be a reasonable and necessary support for one person, may not be for someone else. A person's requests for support are always determined by an understanding of their goals, their support needs, their support networks and the support requested.

What does the NDIA consider to be a day-to-day living cost?

The simple way to determine if a cost is disability related, or a day-to-day living cost, is to ask yourself, 'would the person need to pay for this if they didn't have a disability?' If the answer is 'yes', then it is unlikely to be funded by the NDIS.

The types of things that are considered day-to-day living costs include housing and food related costs (e.g., groceries, rent) and costs related to everyday activities/lifestyle choices (e.g., movie ticket, gym membership, petrol and car maintenance).

It is important to remember that the NDIS is not an income supplement scheme. This means it does not pay for supports or services because a person is on a low income. This includes when the person's low income could be linked to their having a disability. However, when a 'day-to-day' activity costs more because a person

has a disability, then the NDIS may fund the additional costs. Furthermore, there are ways that you can reframe a support need so that the focus is no longer on the day-to-day cost but on addressing the impairments that make it difficult for the person to pay for, and participate in, the activity. See the below table for examples.

Life area	Unlikely to be funded	May be funded pending individual assessment
Healthy eating	✖ Groceries	✓ Nutritional support and advice ✓ Support to prepare meals ✓ Skills building to cook and shop independently ✓ Budgeting support and advice ✓ Supports to build capacity of informal networks ✓ Linkages to community supports for people with low income e.g., foodbanks
Housing	✖ Rent ✖ Mortgage ✖ House repairs/improvements ✖ Moving costs	✓ Support with cleaning/home maintenance ✓ Assistance to apply for tenancy/maintain tenancy ✓ Supported independent living/specialist disability accommodation ✓ Disability specific home modifications ✓ Budgeting support and advice ✓ Supports to build capacity of informal networks ✓ Linkages to mainstream housing providers ✓ Linkages to community supports for people on low income e.g., Salvation Army
Social and recreation	✖ Event tickets ✖ Food/drinks ✖ Plane tickets/hotel costs	✓ Support worker to accompany to social activities ✓ Social skills building ✓ Public transport skills building ✓ Supports to build capacity of informal networks ✓ Budgeting support and advice ✓ Linkages to community supports for people with low income e.g., concession schemes, free events
Employment and education	✖ Course fees ✖ Clothing/uniforms	✓ Supported employment (e.g., ADEs) ✓ Linkages to mainstream employment and education supports e.g., fee assistance schemes ✓ Supports to build capacity of informal networks ✓ Employment skills building ✓ Assistance to transition to employment

Strengthening existing support networks

The NDIS does not fund supports that can be accessed through existing support options. This includes mainstream supports (e.g., those that are available to all Australians, like healthcare), community supports (e.g., sports clubs, charities, libraries, community centres) and informal support networks (e.g., friends, family).

Instead, the NDIS is designed to complement these existing systems, to build their capacity to support people with a disability, and to ensure that people with a disability are able to make the most of these supports. People whose support needs fall across multiple systems (e.g., NDIS, mainstream, informal and community) may have NDIS funding (e.g. psychosocial recovery coaching) to help them to access and navigate these options.

Building the capacity of informal support networks is also a vital part of the NDIS. Where supports can be provided by a person's friend, family or carer – without it impacting the wellbeing of the support person or participant – it is always preferable. This ensures that the person with a disability is supported to build and

maintain real social connections. However, if the required support goes beyond what is reasonable to expect of informal networks or is beyond the capacity of the person's informal network (e.g., aging carers), then the NDIA may include funded supports in the plan to reduce the burden on the informal support networks. Understanding the person, their informal networks, and their capacity is critical to determining if additional supports should be funded.

Resources

- Transition support project training 'Reasonable and Necessary in the NDIS"
- NDIS participant booklet 1 'Understanding the NDIS'
- NDIS participant booklet 2 'Planning'
- Reasonable and necessary pre-planning considerations (overleaf)

Reasonable and necessary pre-planning considerations

The table below includes a series of questions to help you to determine if a support might fit the reasonable and necessary criteria. It also includes additional considerations that can help to prepare for a planning/review meeting. For a support to meet the criteria it would need to check every box. See below examples and overleaf for a blank version.

Reasonable and necessary criteria	Pre-planning considerations
Support type: *Support worker to accompany Sam when leaving the house for daily activities (e.g., shopping) and recreation (e.g., the movies)*	
☒Is directly related to the person's **disability.** (and not an 'everyday/lifestyle' cost)	**How does the person's disability result in a need for this support?** *Sam experiences extreme social anxiety when out in public and doesn't leave the house. This is directly related to his psychosocial impairments.*
☒ Will help the person to achieve their **goals.**	**Which goal(s) and how?** *Sam would like to build his social network and also become more independent. Being able to leave the house is an important first step in achieving goals that require social interaction.*
☒Will help the person to participate in **social** and/or **work/volunteering** activities.	**How will it faciltiate work/social activities?** *See above*
☒Is likely to **benefit** (and definitely not harm!) the person.	**What are the expected benefits?** *Sam has previously been able to participate more fully in the community with the help of a support person. It is expected that with this support Sam can learn to be more comfortable in social situations.*
☒Is **value for money** relative to alternatives.	**What are the alternatives?** *Capacity building for Sam to be able to participate in the community independently would have more long-term benefits that someone supporting Sam for every outing. A person to accompany Sam plus build capacity and skills would be best value.*
☒Is not reasonable/feasible for **friends, family or the community** to provide this support.	**What support networks does the person have? What are the limitations of these networks?** *Sam's sister has been providing this support but cannot be with Sam all the time because she works a full-time job. Furthermore, Sam's sister does not have the mental health training to be able to build Sam's capacity for future independence in the community. Sam has no other social connections beyond his sister and formal supports. Building social networks is a goal for Sam.*
☒The support is most **appropriately funded by the NDIS** and is not available through mainstream or other funded services.	**What mainstream services already exist in this area, and how does this support complement them?** *Sam has a mental health plan and receives psychotherapy support for agoraphobia and social anxiety. This proposed NDIS support provides the additional day-to-day support necessary for Sam to progress his goals in the community and is beyond the scope of the psychotherapy.*

Reasonable and necessary pre-planning considerations

Reasonable and necessary criteria	Pre-planning considerations
Support type:	
☐Is directly related to the person's **disability.** (and not an 'everyday/lifestyle' cost)	How does the person's disability result in a need for this support? .
☐ Will help the person to achieve their **goals.**	Which goal(s) and how?
☐Will help the person to participate in **social** and/or **work/volunteering** activities.	How will it faciltiate work/social activities?
☐Is likely to **benefit** (and definitely not harm!) the person.	What are the expected benefits?
☐Is **value for money** relative to alternatives.	What are the alternatives?
☐Is not reasonable/feasible for **friends, family or the community** to provide this support.	What support networks does the person have? What are the limitations of these networks?
☐The support is most **appropriately funded by the NDIS** and is not available through mainstream or other funded services.	What mainstream services already exist in this area, and how does this support complement them?