**Disability Enterprises and the NDIS**

**NDIS readiness planning for Disability Enterprises**

NDS has developed a suite of resources for our Disability Enterprise members to assist with their NDIS readiness planning. We have been working closely with the NDIA to ensure that employment is being paid proper attention in respect of the rollout of the scheme. This includes work on the development of an appropriate funding/pricing model for supported employment.

NDS will also work with the NDIA to ensure that:

* There is appropriate emphasis on employment in individual plans and the planning process
* NDIA staff are suitably informed about the various employment models
* More support can be provided to Disability Enterprises through any state based transition supports currently provided

The NDIS transition planning issues that NDS members (especially standalone Disability Enterprises that currently only provide supported employment) should be considering include the following:

* Assessments and referrals
  + Appropriate jobseekers being referred to the employer
  + The ability of the NDIA to refer jobseekers in a timely manner
  + The duration of the service guarantee for current supported employees deemed ineligible for the NDIS
* Assessor’s knowledge of supported employment
  + Individual participant plans should identify appropriate employment supports
* Pricing and payment structures
  + Development of suitable price structure that adequately reflects cost of service provision
  + Ensuring adequate cash flow
  + Ensuring reimbursement for services provided (concerns about individuals arbitrarily attempting to move between providers)
  + Enabling the ongoing employment of support staff
* The importance of the employment contract
  + That Disability Enterprises retain the right to engage and terminate employees as necessary, as per current IR provisions
* Ensuring that Boards of management are not unduly alarmed in respect of readiness and transition strategies
* How does a Disability Enterprise apply to the NDIA to provide a wider range of supports? In order to widen the range of supports they provide organisations may need to update their constitutions. Disability Enterprises should familiarise themselves with the [provider registration procedures](http://www.ndis.gov.au/document/changes-provider-registration) available on the NDIS website.

**Assessment and funding models for employment support under the NDIS:**

Development of a new pricing and assessment model for the provision of ongoing employment support needs to be a key objective for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). Employees that remain funded under the current DSS Disability Employment Assistance Program agreement continue to have their funding assessed under the Disability Maintenance Instrument (DMI). Those employees that have transitioned to funding through the NDIA (i.e. they are eligible for funded employment supports) are funded at their existing DMI level.

However, new employees accessing supported employment via the NDIA with Disability Enterprises operating in new NDIS sites are funded at an average DMI level within their Disability Enterprise, assessed from mid-2017. This is because those new employees can no longer receive a DMI assessment through the DSS assessment and payments system, FOFMS.

Consequently, NDS supports a pricing mechanism for the NDIS that ensures Disability Enterprises can viably continue to employ people with disability, including those with high support needs.

**Current employment supports identified in the NDIS Provider Price Guide:**

**Support: Price:**

Employment preparation and support in a group $18.88/hr

Individual employment support $56.63/hr

Employment related assessments and counselling $178.98/hr

Assistance in specialised supported employment level 1 DMI $86.53/wk

Assistance in specialised supported employment level 2 DMI $146.31/wk

Assistance in specialised supported employment level 3 DMI $219.92/wk

Assistance in specialised supported employment level 4 DMI $291.69/wk

Supported employment start-up fee (Disability Enterprise) $634.07 per plan

**The NDS NDIS Provider Toolkit:**

Members are reminded that the more comprehensive [Provider Toolkit](https://www.nds.org.au/resources/ndis-provider-toolkit) developed by NDS covers areas of business practice improvement required under the NDIS that are not covered in the DSS Disability Enterprise Self-Assessment Tool. The NDS Provider Toolkit has been structured to include staff across an organisation.

Organisations that provide both supported employment and other disability services are encouraged to use the NDS Provider Toolkit in tandem with the DSS Disability Enterprise Self-Assessment Tool. This will help ensure that decisions made about the Disability Enterprise’s operations are based on a holistic assessment of the entire organisation’s suite of services.

The Toolkit’s Seven Key Questions

These questions are high-level and open-ended to help organisations think broadly about how they will respond to the NDIS. They are structured around the seven domains used in the Toolkit. They may be useful in board or staff meetings and workshops, especially as an introduction to completing the self-assessment tool.

Strategy

How does our strategy allow us to be agile, flexible and responsive to the changes in our sector?

Corporate governance

Are our decision-making processes robust enough to manage the key risks, challenges and opportunities facing our business? How do they support our operation in a competitive environment?

Clients and market focus

How will we differentiate ourselves to retain and attract clients in an increasingly competitive market?

Financial sustainability

What impact will individualised funding have on our business and the way our services are costed, priced and funded? What changes do we need to make?

People and capability

How will we attract, recruit and retain staff with the right values, skills and capabilities to support the changing needs of our clients and our business?

Information and knowledge management

Do we have the right systems in place to the reform? How will our systems support the necessary changes to our business, clients, operations and finances over the next decade?

Safeguarding quality management and improvement

How do our systems, processes and people help us to maintain and improve our quality and competitiveness? How will we know when we are doing well, or at risk?

**The DSS Disability Enterprise Self-Assessment Tool:**

DSS has released a Disability Enterprise Self-Assessment Tool, as well as information on how to apply for transition assistance grants. The tool has been designed to assist Disability Enterprise boards and senior management identify business and service support provision risks that may arise from the transition to the NDIS.   
  
The transition assistance grants are available through a selection process for Disability Enterprises seeking consultancy services to address areas of concern revealed by their completion of the Self-Assessment Tool. To apply for the transition assistance grants, Disability Enterprises must complete the Self-Assessment Tool and provide a quote from an appropriately qualified consultant.   
  
NDS strongly encourages organisations that operate Disability Enterprises to complete the Self-Assessment Tool and apply for the transition assistance grants where necessary.

**Additional Disability Enterprise NDIS readiness resources:**

Frequently asked Questions on the NDIS and supported employment

[NDIS Issues Register](https://www.nds.org.au/ndis-issues-register)