

Spinal Outreach Team Newsletter

Issue 21, January 2018

Welcome to 2018! We wish everyone a happy new year. In this year's newsletter we take a look at the introduction of the **National Disability Insurance Scheme or NDIS**.

In this edition people with spinal cord injury share their NDIS experiences and we have some information about changes to funding. You will also find this year's visit schedule and an update on education and information available on our website.



Contained in this issue:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| SPOT and the NDIS | 1 |
| ANZSCoS workshop | 1 |
| NDIS experiences | 2 |
| Managing NDIS funds | 2 |
| Preparing for NDIS | 3 |
| Over 65s, MASS | 3 |
| NDIS resolving concerns | 3 |
| SPOT regional visits | 4 |
| QSCIS website update | 4 |

Can I access the NDIS?

To receive an individualised support plan through the NDIS you must meet certain eligibility criteria:

- ✓ You have a significant and permanent disability. This can include a disability that is 'episodic', meaning that some days are more affected by it than others.
- ✓ You are an Australian citizen, a permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen who holds a Protected Special Category Visa.
- ✓ You are younger than 65 when you make a formal request to join the NDIS.
- ✓ You live in an area where the NDIS is available.

Phone **1800 800 110** or visit the NDIS Access Checklist at www.ndis.gov.au/ndis-access-checklist for more details.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and SPOT

Since July 2016, if you live in Townsville, Mackay, Toowoomba and Ipswich regions, the NDIS has already come to your area. Currently Bundaberg, Rockhampton and Gladstone local government areas are being rolled out.

2018 marks the start of the next regions to move to the NDIS including Brisbane, Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands, Cairns and far north Queensland, Fraser Coast and Burnett. The NDIS will be available state wide by July 2019.

For SPOT it is business as usual and we will continue to provide information and advice about spinal cord injury to you and the service providers that support you. As always we will endeavour to link you with information, resources and supports in your local area and this includes services you may now be able to access as part of an NDIS plan.

Whilst we have had feedback at SPOT about delays, frustrations and gaps in the supports for some people in the change to the NDIS, generally people are reporting that they have been able to access more supports than before, which is great.

With a scheme as big as the NDIS, it is not surprising to have some issues along the way and we are happy to assist in linking you with information and advice if you have concerns.

National Disability Insurance Scheme workshop at ANZSCoS

The Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Spinal Cord Society (ANZSCoS) was held in Brisbane in November 2017 and included a workshop to discuss how to improve NDIS planning and implementation outcomes for people with spinal cord injury (SCI). This was an important opportunity to bring together a range of participants with experience in SCI including people with SCI,



specialist rehabilitation and community service providers from around Australia and New Zealand, and representatives from the National Disability Insurance Agency Queensland (NDIA).

The NDIS is a significant and important social policy reform that will positively impact the lives of people with SCI. At the workshop it was clear that there was a willingness and recognition of the importance for the NDIA and specialist services to work together with people with SCI to achieve the best possible outcomes from the scheme.

Pictured from left to right are workshop organisers: Pauline Davis, Executive Manager, Commercial Services Spinal Life Australia; Kiley Pershouse, Manager, SPOT; Donna Harre, Project Officer, Division of Rehabilitation MSH; Professor Michele Foster, The Hopkins Centre: Research for Rehabilitation and Resilience.

People with spinal cord injury share their experiences of the NDIS



Ken

In May 2016 I suffered a spinal cord injury that has resulted in incomplete paraplegia. While in the Spinal Unit (SIU), I was supported to commence planning for my first NDIS plan and I have subsequently developed a second plan.

My overall planning experience for both plans was very positive which I believe can be attributed to the level of detailed planning we did prior to meeting with the NDIS planner.

I had support to develop my first plan and I carried over the same level of planning for my second plan, providing NDIS with a fully scoped and costed plan for my required supports.

The NDIS planners I met with to discuss my plans were very knowledgeable and helpful and have continued to be available for further queries. I understand, though, that this has not been the case for a number of participants.

While the planning phase was positive, implementation has been frustrating. The biggest frustration is where NDIS required assessments or prescriptions for supports, which resulted in delays.

For my second plan, the NDIS planner suggested Plan Management which was a great idea and is working well. I can arrange supports with whichever supplier I want and then use my Plan Manager to manage the finances.

For my second plan the NDIS planner suggested Plan Management

Alan

My experience with the NDIS so far has been positive. My wife, Jackie, and I decided to self-manage my NDIS plan. We manage our plan through the MyGov computer portal.

I need carers 24/7, including an active sleepover, because of my respiratory needs. For Jackie and me, being able to self-manage and invoice carers directly has enabled us to optimise our funding. This amount of care wasn't possible through my previous Disability Services funding so it has been a big improvement.

When I developed my first plan with the NDIS I was offered a phone planning session but I insisted on a face to face meeting. I spent four hours with a planner and it went well. I think meeting face to face helped me develop a good plan. My tip for others would be to do your homework before the planning meeting.

I'm positive that my NDIS plan will be able to incorporate new supports in the future, such as different power drive wheelchair controllers, as my needs change.



Do your homework

How can funding in NDIS plans be managed?

From the Queensland roll out participant information pack available on the NDIS website

Agency Managed – This is where the providers claim directly from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Plan Manager – Funding in your plan is allocated for a third party to manage the financial transactions in your plan.

Self Managed – You (or your nominee) directly manage the funds; all transactions are completed by the participant for services rendered.

Automated Payments (transport only) – These funds can be deposited into a bank account weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Combination – A combination of the above options can be used together to meet your individual needs.

Sharne

I completed my NDIS Access Request form with my GP. Neither of us could really understand the aim of the questions so we completed it to the best of our ability and understanding. I have a T12/L1 paraplegia and my application was rejected at first. I was told this was because I could walk (with crutches). I didn't accept this outcome and, with help from SPOT, I put in a detailed appeal letter which covered how I moved through my house, managed my work and life and how I met the disability criteria for the NDIS, and this time I was successful in gaining access to the NDIS. I had my over-the-phone planning meeting which went really well and my plan is currently being costed by the NDIA.

If you have all this ahead of you then my advice would be:

- Seek all the help you can get from your support group.
- Read all you can about what the NDIS does and does not provide for.
- Be prepared for your planning meeting, knowing exactly what you need to support you in your life.
- Be prepared to argue if you need items that may seem odd, but you think are essential to your life as a direct result of your disability, and thus able to be termed reasonable and necessary (as per NDIS criteria).
- If you think you meet the access requirements but your application is initially rejected, remember you can go through the review process. That is what it is for.

You can go through a review process if you think a decision is wrong

Preparing for NDIS planning: Resources available from SPOT

Once you have been assessed as eligible for the NDIS you will be invited to talk to a planner appointed by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). They will help you to develop a plan that will outline the 'reasonable and necessary' services and supports you require. This plan usually goes for one year, after which time you will have the opportunity to review your plan and make any changes.

Getting ready for your NDIS planning meeting

To make the most of your NDIS planning meeting we've learnt that you need to be well prepared! NDIS planning is all about you - your daily needs, your goals and the supports you need to make it happen. There are lots of ways to find out more including free information sessions, meetings, workshops, phone support and online information.

There is a lot of information on the NDIS website www.ndis.gov.au and you can also call the NDIA on **1800 800 110**. The Queensland Government has an online Events Calendar which provides information about upcoming events and activities related to the NDIS happening across Queensland. Just search for QLD NDIS Events Calendar. These events are very helpful to increase your knowledge about the NDIS and to start getting ready.

We have also developed some resources to help people with spinal cord injury prepare for the NDIS. These include an NDIS pre-planning information sheet and an NDIS pre-planning tool. These are helpful and easy to use.

Contact SPOT if you would like a copy of our NDIS pre-planning information sheet and tool

Aged 65 and over when the NDIS rolls out?

To meet the age requirement of the NDIS you must be under 65 when you apply to join the scheme. If you are aged 65 years or over you may be eligible for support under programs administered by the Commonwealth Department of Health, Division of Ageing and Aged Care Services.

Continuity of Support Program, also called CoS Program, supports people with a disability who are existing clients of Disability Services QLD (DSQ). It is important to note that just being registered with DSQ does not qualify you for CoS; you need to be receiving funding for disability supports such as personal care.

If you are an existing client of DSQ, and you are aged over 65 once the NDIS has commenced where you live, your funding will be transferred to CoS. You will continue to receive your disability supports from your current service provider. Costs will remain the same and all your MASS and CAPS funding will continue as previously. Your level of disability supports should remain the same and your services will not need to change unless you wish to change service providers.

My Aged Care provides information and access to services if you are over 65 and not an existing client of Disability Services Queensland when the NDIS commences in your area. Services include help in your home, respite and residential aged care. To find out more phone My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** or visit www.myagedcare.gov.au

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS)

MASS is a state wide service that provides eligible Queenslanders with subsidised access to medical aids and equipment.

The introduction of the NDIS will affect how some people access these supports in the future.

Queenslanders who are not able to access the NDIS can continue to apply to access services and subsidies coordinated by MASS if they meet MASS eligibility requirements.

Currently MASS coordinates the **Community Aids, Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiative (CAEATI)** and the **Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme (VOSS)**.

The CAEATI and VOSS schemes are impacted by the roll out of the NDIS.

If you are seeking CAEATI and VOSS assistance you will need to submit your applications to MASS three months prior to when the NDIS starts rolling out in your area.

To find out more phone MASS on **1300 443 570** or visit www.health.qld.gov.au/mass

Resolving your concerns

ndis

Our goal is to understand and resolve concerns as quickly as possible, long before they become complaints.

| Concern: | What can you do: | What the NDIS will do: |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| I'm concerned about an NDIS decision | Request an internal review of the decision | Review the decision |
| I'm concerned about my experience with the NDIS | Make a complaint | Investigate your complaint |
| I'm concerned about my disability service provider | Talk to your disability service provider | Talk to you about your options |

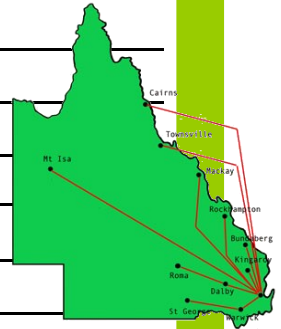
Contact us

- Call 1800 800 110
- Visit www.ndis.gov.au
- Email enquiries@ndis.gov.au
- Email feedback@ndis.gov.au
- National Disability Insurance Agency
GPO Box 700
Canberra ACT 2601

Regional visits 2018

Check out this year's schedule so you know when we will be in your area.

| Area | Week Of |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Toowoomba, Pittsworth and surrounding areas | 29 th January 2018 |
| Roma, Dalby and west | 19 th February 2018 |
| Mackay, south to Sarina and north to Bowen | 12 th March 2018 |
| Rockhampton and west, Emerald & Dysart | 26 th March 2018 |
| Cairns and Hinterland, north to Cooktown and the Cape | 30 th April 2018 |
| Bundaberg and Monto | 28 th May 2018 |
| Nambour and north of Nambour to Gympie | 18 th June 2018 |
| Longreach, Winton and surrounding region | 16 th July 2018 |
| Stanthorpe, Warwick and west | 30 th July 2018 |
| Kingaroy, Murgon, Gayndah and Mundubbera | 20 th August 2018 |
| Townsville and Mt Isa (including Palm Island) | 17 th September 2018 |
| Cairns and Hinterland, south to Tully | 8 th October 2018 |
| Gladstone, Biloela, Theodore and Bundaberg | 29 th October 2018 |
| Hervey Bay and Maryborough | 26 th November 2018 |



What's new on the Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service website?

www.health.qld.gov.au/qscis

The **QSCIS website** contains useful fact sheets for people with SCI, their families, service providers and health professionals. It's been a busy year for the web page with many of the documents updated.

We have added some new fact sheets which may be particularly useful for GPs in working with people with SCI. Consider discussing these with your doctor. You will find them in the **"Health and Wellness"** section.

Autonomic dysreflexia and blood pressure management in people with SCI.

This is a problem area for people with tetraplegia and high thoracic paraplegia but may not be common knowledge for health practitioners unless they have had experience working with someone with SCI.

Temperature regulation in people with SCI.

People with SCI at the level of T6 and above can lack the control to respond appropriately to environmental changes in temperature. As a result, they may experience high or low body temperatures and this can be of particular concern in the summer season. Most people with this level of injury will require air conditioning in their home, car and workplace.

The **Equipment** section contains some new fact sheets to assist you in maintaining your equipment including:

- Looking after your mobile shower commode and transfer bench
- Looking after your hoist and slings

SPOT's shower commode seat templates are now also available as electronic forms.

Contact SPOT if you want to know more.

Spinal Outreach Team Contact Details

Phone: 3406 2300 or 1800 624 832 (for regional clients)

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Web: www.health.qld.gov.au/qscis

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