

#4aBetterNDIS

Why we need to be concerned about NDIS allied health services

The NDIS supports Australians with disabilities, helping them achieve their goals and improve their quality of life. Therapy supports, assistive technology and orthotic and prosthetic services help participants with independence, mobility, personal care, and community participation. Most NDIS participants use allied health services, including:

- **Physiotherapy:** Improves movement and physical function.
- **Occupational Therapy:** Helps with daily activities and independence.
- **Speech Therapy:** Aids communication and swallowing.
- **Psychology:** Provides mental health support.
- **Behavioural Therapy:** Manages challenging behaviours.
- **Art and Music Therapy:** Enhances emotional well-being.
- **Orthotists/prosthetists:** Assess functional limitations and provide/review orthoses and prostheses.

What has changed with the new price guide in 2024?

1. **Price Freeze:** NDIS allied health prices haven't changed in five years, except for a recent small increase for psychology. The costs of providing services, especially for registered providers, are significant and have increased with wage rises and the cost of living. Some allied health professionals already do not bill participants for some essential work because it is not properly funded by the NDIS or the provider is concerned that plan funding will run out.
2. **Provider Decline:** Many providers are stopping or planning to stop their services because they are now operating at a loss and can't afford to continue. For example, recent surveys found 85% of occupational therapists, 74% of exercise physiologists and 60% of music therapists are reconsidering their future in the NDIS.

Why we need to be concerned

Without allied health services it is much more challenging for participants to achieve their goals and live fulfilling lives. Participants in most states and territories currently spend less than 60% of their therapy support budgets because they cannot obtain the allied health services approved in their plan. This is a much lower figure than for NDIS supports as a whole.

- **It is becoming harder to find services:** With even fewer allied health providers available, participants may struggle to get the services they need. This can lead to delays and gaps in their support.
- **Longer wait lists for supports:** With fewer providers, wait lists for allied health services are likely to get longer. This may delay participants' progress, lead to deterioration in function that could be prevented, and impact on their quality of life. For children, getting allied health supports early is critical.
- **Challenges in rural, remote, and regional areas:** Participants in rural, remote, and regional areas already face particularly limited access to services. Loss of providers due to inadequate pricing exacerbates this issue, making it even harder for participants to find and receive necessary therapies. Significant delays and increased travel times are likely to further affect their ability to get timely support.

What are we asking for?

It's simple. We are asking the NDIA to **fairly fund allied health services**. Pricing should be increased to meet the true costs of providing services and reflected in participants' budgets.

Registered allied health providers should also receive a temporary payment to assist with additional costs.

Independent Pricing: We are asking the Government to implement independent pricing for NDIS services. This means having an external body set fair prices that reflect the real costs of providing services, ensuring providers can stay financially viable. These actions are crucial to ensure that participants continue to receive the quality supports they need.

To learn more or support the campaign visit www.4abetterndis.com.au



Disability
Intermediaries
Australia

