

Inquiry into the Implementation of the NDIS and the Provision of Disability Services in New South Wales

Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) response to Supplementary Questions

1) Are you aware of any specific groups of people with disability who are not being captured by the NDIS and thus not receiving NDIS funding? Please describe these groups by their disability/medical/health condition.

The RACP has identified the following groups:

- People with severe, complex or challenging behaviours:
 - People with complex support needs, such as those with intellectual disability who also have mental health needs (e.g. conditions such as depression, anxiety, or psychotic disorders like schizophrenia) face particular challenges in understanding their eligibility and accessing their necessary or appropriate supports.
 - Some can't receive support because the scheme hasn't yet reached where they live (a common issue in regional and remote areas) or there is a lack of suitable service providers in their local area.
- People with psychosocial disability:
 - People with psychosocial disability face varying impacts from their disability over time, which may exclude them from NDIS eligibility. People with this type of disability need to have access to adequate supports for health maintenance, preventive and acute care when required. Those with deteriorating or fluctuating conditions may have varying levels of support needs over time.
- Children with complex behavioural disabilities:
 - Children with disruptive behaviours and complex developmental trauma - including neurodevelopmental, intellectual and behavioural disabilities - may not be adequately supported under current models of service. Children on the milder end of the autism spectrum (level 1 on ADOS – autism diagnostic observational scale) for example, are not eligible for early intervention services.
 - These behaviours of concern are often indicators of unmet needs and require a multi-agency response which may not be available depending on where a family lives – this is particularly difficult for children in out of home care seeking suitable accommodation.

2) How are these groups accessing the support and services they need, if not by the NDIS?

- Although Local Area Coordinators (LACs) are expected to help connect ineligible individuals to relevant supports in their community, this may not be possible as many do not have the appropriate skills and experience to work with individuals with complex support needs.
- When there is the option of private services, ineligible individuals may not be able to afford care through private providers. Emergency departments may be the only other

option, which may result in individuals presenting to acute hospitals via ambulance or the police as a “last resort”.

- The transition of Ageing, Disability and Homecare (ADHC) and other services to the NDIS has led to a shift in service availability, which will likely put further strain on health and justice services in NSW.
- This is particularly common for people living with psychosocial disability in rural and regional areas, where there is a lack of psychiatric nurses and often fragmented mental health services and facilities.
- Some people may reach out to aged care services if they are able to prove that they have exhausted all other options, however these services are designed very differently from disability services, which may affect the quality of care provided.
- This includes young people living with disability in residential care facilities, who experience complex health and disability support needs and are discharged into residential aged care in the absence of viable alternatives.
- Residential aged care is not designed to meet the needs of younger people with disabilities, leaving facilities and staff struggling to provide appropriate care.