



**NDIS Quality  
and Safeguards  
Commission**

# Community Engagement Payment Policy

Payment to individuals and  
organisations engaged by the  
NDIS Commission

Internal and External use

Version 2.0



**NDIS Quality  
and Safeguards  
Commission**

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

PO Box 210, Penrith NSW 2751

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## Definitions

The meaning of key terms and abbreviations in this procedure are set out in the table below.

**Table 1 – Definitions, key terms and abbreviations used in this document**

Term or Abbreviation	Description
APS	Australian Public Service
EOI	Expression of Interest
NDIS Act	<u><i>The National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013</i></u>
NDIS Commission	NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
NDIS Procedural Fairness Guidelines	<u>National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018</u>
TFN	Tax File Number



## 1. Purpose

This policy explains how the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) makes payments to individuals and organisations who contribute to consultation, co-design, research and other collaborative engagement activities.

It aims to ensure that people who share their expertise and lived experience are fairly compensated and that financial barriers to participation are minimised.

## 2. Policy scope

This policy applies to:

- NDIS Commission employees, contractors and volunteers involved in designing, planning or managing engagement activities.
- NDIS participants, supporters, and members of the disability community who are invited to contribute to the Commission's work through consultation, co-design or advisory processes.

Engagement may occur through activities such as advisory committees, focus groups, research, or panel events.

### Out of scope:

This policy does not apply to individuals who:

- participate in unsolicited engagement activities
- attend public events without an invitation
- are contracted through procurement arrangements to deliver services.

## 3. Relevant legislative provisions

This policy supports the implementation of the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Cth) (the NDIS Act), specifically its focus on:

- upholding the rights of people with disability
- promoting meaningful participation and inclusion in matters that affect them
- improving the quality and safety of NDIS services.

Where applicable, this policy is also informed by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Procedural Fairness) Guidelines 2018 (NDIS Procedural Fairness Guidelines).

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## 4. Policy statements

### Guiding Principles for Engagement

The NDIS Commission is committed to engaging with people with lived experience of disability and other community members to shape its policies, programs and practices. The Commission acknowledges that meaningful engagement requires removing barriers, including financial ones, and that payment recognises and values the time, expertise and effort contributed by participants.

Engagement is guided by the NDIS Commission's values and strategic intent:

- Our purpose: To uphold the rights of NDIS participants, elevate quality and safety, and enable participant independence
- Our vision: That people with disability achieve their aspirations.

This policy takes an ethical, sustainable, and inclusive approach to payment, consistent with principles followed across the Australian Government.

### Eligibility

This policy applies to individuals and organisations who are formally invited by the NDIS Commission to contribute to engagement activities, including:

- Advisory groups or consultative committees (ongoing or time-limited), or their representative/s
- Co-design projects
- Research or evaluation activities
- Specific initiatives or community forums
- Individuals with lived experience of disability, with support as required
- Carers, family members or supporters
- People under 18, who may participate where parental/guardian approval is obtained and where participation is deemed suitable for their age and wellbeing.

### Not eligible for payment:

- NDIS Commission employees and contractors
- APS or state/territory government staff
- Individuals paid via other contractual/funding arrangements for the same contribution.

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## Conflict of Interest

The NDIS Commission is committed to transparent, fair and ethical engagement processes. Individuals or organisations invited to participate in paid activities must declare any actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest.

A conflict of interest may include (but is not limited to):

- A financial interest in outcomes related to the activity
- Personal or professional relationships with NDIS Commission staff involved in selection
- Simultaneous roles that may influence decision-making.

Where a conflict is identified, the NDIS Commission will assess the situation and may modify or withdraw the invitation to participate. Participants are responsible for notifying the Commission if a conflict of interest arises before or during the engagement.

## 5. Engagement activities

The NDIS Commission engages with individuals and organisations through a variety of activities to support inclusive consultation, co-design, research, and collaboration.

These activities may involve short-term projects or longer-term participation in advisory or consultative groups. Participation may occur in person, online, or via written input.

The following subsections outline how the NDIS Commission invites people to participate, the types of activities it conducts, how it selects contributors, and the approach to accessibility.

### Invitation to engage

Individuals or organisations may be invited by the NDIS Commission to contribute their experience and expertise to a specific engagement activity.

These activities may include committees, advisory groups, initiatives or projects, and can involve:

- face-to-face forums
- online meetings
- teleconferencing
- providing written feedback in response to specific questions.

Invitations will clearly explain:

- whether the activity is paid
- the format and duration
- the expected outcomes
- the applicable sections of this policy
- the terms of participation, including cancellation or withdrawal options.

With the individual's consent, the NDIS Commission may retain contact details to invite them to future engagement opportunities.

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## **Types of engagement activities**

The NDIS Commission conducts a variety of engagement activities to gather insights and perspectives from people with lived experience, sector representatives, and other community members.

Engagement activities covered by this policy may include:

- Meetings of advisory groups, such as the Consultative Committee and its subcommittees
- One-on-one interviews
- Focus groups or workshops (one-off or short-term series)
- Contributions to time-limited projects or informal working groups
- Research and consultation sessions
- Photo or video shoots for NDIS Commission initiatives
- Speaking or panel participation at NDIS Commission events.

This policy applies only to invited participants contributing to defined engagement activities. It does not apply to unsolicited input or general public engagement.

## **Unpaid activities**

Not all engagement activities are eligible for payment. If an activity is unpaid, the invitation will clearly state this so individuals can make an informed decision about participating voluntarily.

Examples of unpaid engagement activities include:

- Attendance at public forums or presentations hosted by the NDIS Commission
- Completing public surveys, polls or questionnaires
- Informal or general discussions with Commission staff
- Providing advice or facilitation under an existing contract or funding agreement
- Offering unsolicited feedback, stories or personal perspectives not requested as part of a formal engagement process.

These contributions are valuable to the NDIS Commission's work but fall outside the scope of paid participation under this policy.



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## Selecting people for paid activities

When planning paid engagement activities, the NDIS Commission seeks contributions from individuals and organisations with relevant knowledge, lived experience, and insight.

The NDIS Commission uses a range of channels to identify suitable participants, including:

- Community networks
- Disability representative organisations (DROs)
- Advocacy bodies
- Sector peak bodies
- Commission-led committees and consultative groups
- Internal staff networks and professional referrals.

Participants may be invited directly or through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. Each EOI will clearly outline:

- The activity format
- Expected time commitment
- Whether payment is offered.

Selection processes must reflect the diversity of the disability community and comply with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.

## Accessibility

The NDIS Commission is committed to making all engagement activities accessible, inclusive, and respectful of individual needs.

Steps will be taken to reduce barriers to participation, including:

- Choosing accessible venues for in-person meetings
- Providing materials in accessible formats (e.g. large print, Easy Read, or screen-reader compatible)
- Providing Auslan interpreters where required
- Allowing support persons or communication aides to accompany participants
- Making reasonable adjustments based on individual requirements.

Individuals with specific access needs are encouraged to contact the NDIS Commission using the phone number or email provided in their invitation, so that appropriate arrangements can be made in advance.

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## 6. Payment

The NDIS Commission provides payment to individuals or organisations who are formally invited to contribute their time and expertise to specific engagement activities, in line with this policy.

Participation in engagement activities is voluntary and does not create an employment relationship with the NDIS Commission. Payment for time or reimbursement of expenses is not classified as salary or wages.

If an individual or organisation chooses not to receive payment, they may opt out of being paid or reimbursed by notifying the Commission in writing or verbally (which will be recorded).

Where a participant is acting on behalf of an organisation or group, payment will be made to that entity unless otherwise agreed. If the organisation is already funded by the Commonwealth to deliver the service related to the engagement, payment may not be made. Although expense reimbursement may still be considered on a case-by-case basis.

All payments are made by direct deposit to a nominated bank account.

### Types of payments

Payments under this policy fall into two categories:

1. Payment for time: to recognise the expertise and contribution of participants who engage in NDIS Commission activities
2. Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses: to cover reasonable costs directly related to participation, such as travel or accommodation

All payments are assessed in accordance with Australian Government guidance and represent fair compensation while ensuring value for money.

### Payment for your time

Payment for participation is based on the Australian Government's [Remuneration Tribunal \(Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office\) Determination](#), in effect at the time of each engagement, specifically Section 12, Table 2A.

While contributors are not classified as part-time public office holders or employees under the Determination, the rates provide a consistent and transparent benchmark for compensation.

Payment amounts and conditions will be clearly outlined in each invitation and adjusted as required in line with any updates to the Determination.

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## **Out of pocket expenses**

The NDIS Commission may reimburse reasonable and necessary out of pocket expenses incurred as a direct result of participating in an engagement activity, provided these are:

- agreed in advance
- consistent with value-for-money principles
- supported by appropriate documentation (e.g. receipts or tax invoices).

Examples of eligible expenses include:

- Flights (economy fare)
- Local or interstate transport (e.g. taxis, public transport, rideshare, car mileage)
- Accommodation and meals
- Parking fees.

Where a person with disability requires a support person to travel with them, the support person's expenses may also be covered in line with the above conditions.

All reimbursements are considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **Expenses not eligible for reimbursement**

The NDIS Commission will not reimburse expenses that:

- are not directly related to the engagement activity
- fall outside the scope of pre-approved costs
- are considered personal, discretionary or excessive.

Examples of ineligible expenses include:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Tips or gratuities
- Meals or drinks in personal/social settings
- Travel insurance or airline lounge access
- Fines, infringements, or penalties
- Office supplies, printing, or materials not specifically approved.

Exceptions may be made only if written approval is provided in advance by the NDIS Commission.

## **Expenses eligible for reimbursement**

Eligible expenses will be reimbursed in line with the applicable rates set out in the Australian Government's [Remuneration Tribunal](#) (Official Travel) Determination. The following types of expenses may be reimbursed, provided they are necessary for participation and are approved in advance:

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## Accommodation and meals

Where overnight accommodation and meals are required due to the location or timing of an engagement activity, reimbursement will follow the rates in the [Remuneration Tribunal - Official Travel Determination](#), specifically:

- Part 4 Division 2 (travel allowance)
- Part 6 Tier 3 (location-based rate).

Reimbursement will not be provided where an allowance has already been received from another source for the same trip.

## Flights

Return economy airfares are eligible for reimbursement. Airfares must be booked at the lowest practical fare using the most direct route from the person's place of residence or work to the activity location.

The NDIS Commission will not reimburse:

- Premium or business class fares (unless medically required and pre-approved)
- Airline lounge access or travel insurance
- Missed flight fees or additional costs due to personal travel.

Where a person with disability requires a support person to travel with them, the support person's airfare may also be reimbursed under the same conditions.

## Transport

Local transport costs such as taxis, public transport, or rideshare may be reimbursed when participating in face-to-face activities. Costs must represent the lowest reasonable fare.

Private vehicle use may also be reimbursed in accordance with Part 5, Section 26(3) of the Official Travel Determination. The vehicle must be comprehensively insured. Reimbursement will not be made for personal travel not related to the engagement.

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## 7. Receiving payments

The NDIS Commission will explain payment and reimbursement arrangements clearly in the invitation to participate. To receive payment, individuals or organisations must:

- Have an Australian bank account
- Provide their Tax File Number (TFN)
- Provide superannuation details (if applicable).

All payments are made via electronic funds transfer. Other payment methods are not supported.

Individuals and organisations are responsible for understanding and complying with their own financial reporting obligations. This may include notifying relevant agencies such as:

- Services Australia (Centrelink)
- Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

The NDIS Commission will not provide financial advice. Participants are encouraged to seek independent advice if they are unsure how payments may affect their entitlements or obligations.

## 8. Participation fees

Participation fees are calculated in accordance with the [Remuneration Tribunal](#) (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office) Determination.

To receive payment, individuals or organisations must provide:

- A completed Personal or Business Details and Engagement form
- A signed Declaration of Confidentiality
- A Superannuation Choice form
- A TFN declaration form.

If the individual or organisation has an Australian Business Number (ABN), they must submit the business version of these forms. If not, they should submit the personal versions.

### Superannuation

The NDIS Commission is required to make superannuation contributions in accordance with the Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992. This applies even to independent contractors, for the purpose of superannuation.

Superannuation contributions will be paid to the nominated fund once all required forms and payment details are received. It is the responsibility of the payee to ensure that their superannuation details are accurate and up to date.

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## 9. Cancellations

If an engagement activity is cancelled or postponed, the NDIS Commission may reimburse participants for any reasonable and necessary out-of-pocket expenses already incurred.

Reimbursement will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and may be provided if:

- the expenses were non-refundable
- the costs were pre-approved or clearly linked to the activity
- appropriate documentation (such as receipts or booking confirmations) is submitted.

Participants are encouraged to discuss any incurred costs with the Commission as soon as they are aware of a cancellation or change to the engagement.

## 10. Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation and use of this policy will be monitored to ensure that engagement activities:

- uphold the rights of people with disability
- provide equitable and fair access to payment and reimbursement
- align with relevant legislative and financial accountability requirements.

The NDIS Commission will collect data on:

- the number and type of engagement activities involving paid participants
- the timeliness of payments and reimbursements
- participant feedback on the engagement process
- administrative consistency with this policy.

This policy will be formally reviewed every two years, or earlier if:

- legislation or government guidelines are updated
- internal audits identify compliance issues
- feedback suggests the policy is no longer fit for purpose.

Updates and improvements will be managed by the responsible policy owner in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

## 11. Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy, are outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Roles and responsibilities**

Role	Responsibility
NDIS Commission Executives and Directors	Promote inclusive, respectful engagement practices Ensure compliance with this policy Approve high-value or complex engagements and reimbursements
Engagement Leads and Project Officers	Design and coordinate activities in line with the policy Provide payment and participation information to invitees Collect required forms – Support accessibility and inclusion
Corporate Services (Finance/HR)	Process payments and reimbursements Ensure compliance with financial and tax legislation Manage superannuation where applicable
Participants and Organisations	Submit complete and accurate information for payment Disclose conflicts of interest or support needs Manage personal compliance with tax, income, and Centrelink requirements

## 12. Governance

This policy is governed by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and maintained by the Community Engagement Team.

This policy aligns with:

- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Cth)
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act)
- Commonwealth Procurement Rules

This policy may be referenced in:

- Commission consultation frameworks
- Program-level engagement plans
- Staff guidance and internal procedures.

Policy Number	CEPP-2025-02
Supporting procedures	Community Engagement Payment Procedure
Associated supporting documents	Community Engagement Payment Quick Reference Guide; Forms Pack (Engagement Form, Confidentiality, TFN, Superannuation Choice)
Associated policies	Stakeholder Engagement Policy; Conflict of Interest Policy; Travel and Reimbursement Policy; Remuneration Tribunal Determinations
Policy category and sub-category	Governance: Stakeholder Engagement
Endorsement	Sian Leathem, Deputy Commissioner, Complaints and Engagement Endorsement date: 01/10/2025
Policy owner	EL2 Director, Engagement
Policy author	Engagement team
Date effective	01/10/2024
Review date	Last reviewed: 01/10/2025 Next review: 01/06/2026
Content enquiries	engagement@ndiscommission.gov.au

## 13. Version history

This policy will be reviewed yearly in alignment with the first issue and every three years thereafter.

Version	Date	Author	Change description
1.0	01/10/2024	Engagement team	Initial version
2.0	01/11/2025	Engagement team	Aligned to Commission template; minor edits, updated governance information.