



**Syndromes Without A Name (SWAN) Australia**

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## **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Costs Productivity Commission - Issues Paper**

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the NDIS Costs Productivity Commission – Issues Paper.

SWAN Australia supports the principles of the NDIS in theory, however after consultation with a number of SWAN families that have entered into the scheme, they have experienced a number of issues which we have outlined below. Due to time restraints, we have just picked out the main issues in relations to costs, which affect our families.

### Difficulties with transition into the NDIS

Many SWAN families have not experienced a smooth transition period entering the NDIS. They have had difficulty interpreting their plan and their support coordinators have struggled as well.

**Suggestion:** Write the pricing reference and cost next to the item it is allocated against for better transparency.

### Lack of Transparency and Consistency

There have been a lot of mixed messages, depending on which planner or LAC you have your meeting with. Some will tell you they only fund 10 sessions of therapy when it is an uncapped scheme. Others will make a call themselves whether to submit an item to the NDIA for approval depending on what others have been funded for in the past, when really it should be the NDIA who decided an not the planner. Other will tell you the scheme does not fund items such as iPads yet other planners will recommend funding for one in a plan. Others will simply give \$1000 for a “consumable” item.

Another area of inconsistency is when it comes to “face to face” meetings. We have had SWAN families tell us that they are being refused “face to face” meetings because they live in rural areas. This is discrimination.

**Suggestions:** State common items the scheme does not fund e.g. if you do not fund iPad’s put it on the list.  
Clients should be asked what type of meeting they would like

### Support Coordination

We have had many families delay accessing their plans due to delayed process of NDIA passing on their details to them. Many of the support coordinators do not fully understand the scheme and struggle to interpret plans on behalf of clients. There is also the problem that the support coordinator charges the client for every minute they spend on the phone to NDIA trying to find out information for the client. There is also the problem that often the support coordinator cannot find out any information about the service the client is seeking because they do not exist yet. This is very apparent when clients ask for services in areas where the NDIS is not in place yet.

**Suggestions:** Better training for support coordinators, planners and LAC’s

### Transport

The amount allocated in-kind for special school buses is \$11,816.00 whether the child takes the bus one day or five. This would surely affect the cost of the scheme given the number of students who only take the bus part time.

**Suggestion:** Allocate student transport pro rata

### Portal Difficulties

The portal has a number of plans on it if the plan has been reviewed, causing confusions for clients. The headings are not the same as what is written in the plan, leading to interpretation errors. The portal crashes a number of times and the dates need to be entered a certain way. Some days the portal works better than others. There is no form on the MyGov tab or NDIS website to ask for a correction if you accidentally upload a payment request to the wrong category. One family is still waiting 6 weeks later to hear from NDIS re: this issue, after submitting an enquiry regarding this. As there is no way to upload receipts, the portal uploads are open to exploitation.

**Suggestions:** Improve IT on the portal

### Internal review

This is a long drawn out process and the internal review form is not even accessible on your website. Clients have to wait many weeks, have a phone call and face-to-face with nothing resolved many weeks later.

**Suggestions:** Make the internal review process simpler, clearer and quicker.

We would welcome the opportunity to elaborate on our points or clarify them further, either in writing or in person.

Kind regards

**Heather Renton**  
**President**  
**Syndromes Without A Name (SWAN) Australia**