

# CDS

**Centre for**

**Disability**

**Studies**

**Public Submission to the  
Productivity Commission Issues Paper  
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Costs**

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**The Centre for Disability Studies (CDS)** would like to respond to two questions posed in the Issues Paper. Specifically,

Do NDIA assessment tools meet these criteria? What measures or evidence are available for evaluating the performance of assessment tools used by the NDIA?

What are the likely challenges for monitoring and refining the assessment process and tools over time? What implications do these have for scheme costs? (p. 19)

There are well-established psychometric tests and research designs that can interrogate the validity, reliability, accuracy and efficiency of assessment tools. However, a major barrier to the on-going improvement and implementation of the NDIS is the lack of access to, or public domain information on the assessment tool(s) in use by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). Further, anecdotally, and as noted in some submissions to this Issues Paper, it appears there are variable skill levels in the NDIA planners who are completing the assessment and planning process. The ability to provide a meaningful response to these questions posed in the issues paper would be improved if access were available to the assessment tools or processes in use, or at least information available regarding the design and development of these tools.

In the original Disability Care and Support Productivity Commission Inquiry Report (2011) Volume 1 it is stated that "The tools should also be made available at no cost to researchers wanting to develop them further" (p. 319). CDS has a long history in the development and comparative analysis of support needs assessment and classification tools (e.g. Arnold & Riches, 2013; Arnold, Riches & Stancliffe, 2015; Llewellyn, Parmenter, Chan, Riches & Hindmarsh, 2005; Riches, 2003; Riches, Arnold & O'Brien, 2012; Riches & Parmenter, 2000; Riches, Parmenter, Griffin & Stancliffe, 2000; Riches, Parmenter, Llewellyn, Hindmarsh & Chan, 2009) and believes that access to and research regarding the assessment tool(s) and processes in use by the NDIA could benefit the long-term sustainability of the scheme and equity in its resource allocations. Unlike the practice effect on an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) assessment, although the funding algorithm may not be made public domain, we do not see why the assessment tool itself is not public domain, unless for commercial copyright reasons. Many support needs assessments in use across jurisdictions are in the public domain, or are available upon purchase or enquiry. For example, the NSW Government icare (Insurance & Care NSW) Lifetime Care & Support Authority publically lists the assessments tools used to determine eligibility and monitor progress -

<https://www.lifetimecare.nsw.gov.au/information-for-service-providers/participant-assessment->

[tools](#). We would be interested in research opportunities, particularly if NDIA made funding available, for the review or further development of the NDIS assessment tools and processes. In particular we believe stratified sampling of the tool(s) application to various populations is required, including vulnerable groups such as people with high and complex needs who might not have their needs adequately expressed.

## References

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