

Statement from a spokesman for the Minister for the NDIS, Stuart Robert:

As per the Minister's interview with the ABC last week in Tasmania—where there is a 53 per cent difference between average NDIS plan values between the highest in Clark and the lowest in Franklin even as they have similar numbers of active participants—the government will continue to progress with the NDIS reforms to make the Scheme simpler, fairer and consistent.

The government believes access to the Scheme and a NDIS participant's plan should not be determined by your postcode or how much someone can pay for a report.

The government completely rejects any notion there has been no consultation on reforms to the NDIS. The government acknowledges there is an inordinate amount of fear and stress amongst NDIS participants, largely due to the spread of misinformation about the reforms. The government encourages everyone to read about the reforms for themselves via www.ndis.gov.au.

The reforms to the NDIS deliver on the final elements of the Productivity Commission's original design for the Scheme and are based on recommendations from reviews and inquiries, including the 2019 Independent Review of the NDIS Act by David Tune AO PSM.

As per the joint submission by the Department of Social Services and National Disability Insurance Scheme:

The Independent Assessment Framework, released in September 2020, provides further information on the rationale, principles and origins of the assessment framework, including how it is underpinned by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. More than 100 recognised and standardised tools were assessed in developing the assessment framework to ensure they:

- *are disability-neutral, so can be used across all disability-types;*
- *assess function rather than impairment;*
- *are questionnaire-based, to avoid capturing a person's moment-in-time function, for example on a 'good day' or with an unfamiliar assessor; and*
- *are accurate and reliable.*

The approach and the tools to be used have also been endorsed by leading Australian academics:

"The [independent assessment] framework is consistent with international best practice. It has great potential to increase the accuracy of assessment, which is a critical foundation in determining the most appropriate supports for each individual." Professor Andrew Whitehouse, Autism CRC and Telethon Kids Institute, and Professor of Autism Research at The University of Western Australia.

"[The NDIA] have outlined a framework on which to build a fairer and more consistent disability assessment- to enable the rights of people with disability to participate across society. This diagnosis-neutral framework combines both the need to evaluate capacity and the determining role of the environment in helping or hindering participation. " Dr Ros Madden AM, University of Sydney Honorary Research Fellow, University of Sydney and Nick Glozier, Professor of Psychological Medicine, University of Sydney.

"The new functional capacity assessment framework by NDIS aligned to the International Classification of Functioning will undoubtedly enhance the development of effective programs matching each individual's functional level and needs, thereby optimising outcomes." Valsamma Eapen, Professor and Chair of Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of New South Wales, and Head of the Academic Unit of Child Psychiatry, South West Sydney.