

Mental Health and the NDIS

Find clarity and get answers to
better understand the NDIS and the
support options available to you.



**Plan
Partners**

Together, it's possible

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Mental Health and the NDIS



Today, 600,000 Australians live with severe and persistent mental health conditions. And roughly 64,000 of these people will be eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS provides funding for important supports that help eligible participants reach their goals and improve their life in the way that they want to.

As leading providers for both NDIS plan management and support coordination, we're experts when it comes to NDIS plans, funding, and the support options available to you. We've created this eBook to give you helpful insights about how the NDIS works, whether you could be eligible, and how to make the most of your funding should you qualify.



How does the NDIS work?



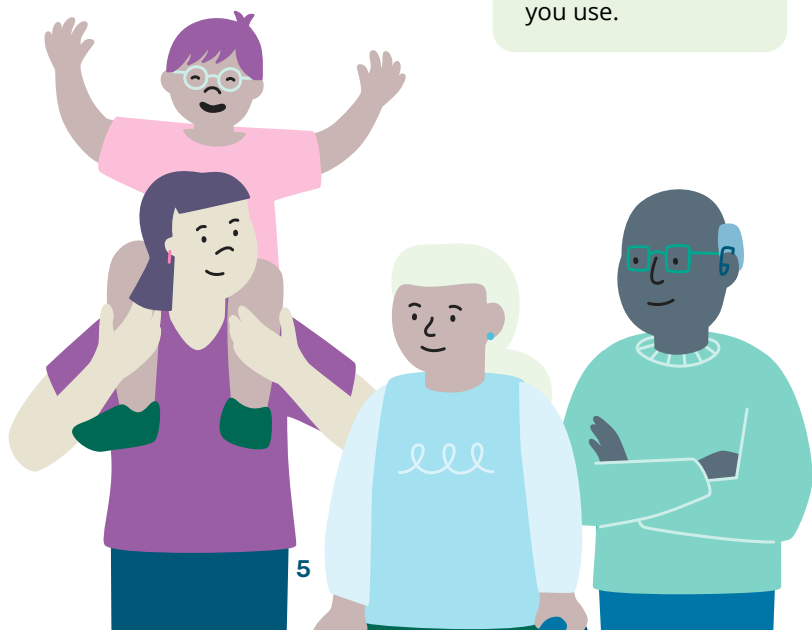
The NDIS gives funding to eligible participants based on your needs and goals. Funding is allocated for supports that focus on helping you live your day-to-day life, not so much treatment or diagnosis of your mental health condition – clinical supports like these are generally covered by the health system.

If your application is accepted by the NDIS, you receive a plan that reflects your aspirations, goals, and the funding you've been given. These funds can be used to pay for supports and services that help you work towards your goals and build greater independence and fulfillment in your life.

✓ **HANDY TIPS**

Goal Building

Goals are very much an individual thing and can vary from building your communication skills to making friends and finding work. As an NDIS participant, you have full choice and control over your supports and which service providers you use.



7 Steps to getting started with the NDIS



1. Check your eligibility

While the NDIA looks at each application individually, you need to meet its criteria to be eligible for the NDIS (more on page 6).

2. Familiarise yourself with the application process

The NDIS has a website (www.ndis.gov.au), hotline, and local offices where you can enquire directly about the application process should you have questions.

3. Undergo a medical assessment

Your allied health professional or GP can provide important documentation to support your application.

4. Submit an application

Fill out the necessary forms (more on page 7) and submit them with the required information and documentation.

5. Prepare for your planning meeting

If your application is approved, you will have a planning meeting with your NDIS planner or Local Area Coordinator (LAC) to develop your NDIS plan (more on page 9).

6. Understand your plan

Once you get your NDIS plan, check the details are correct and begin familiarising yourself with your plan and support options. If you have any concerns or you feel your plan doesn't represent your needs, contact your NDIS planner or LAC.

7. Start accessing supports

Begin finding the best supports for you (more on page 10). These may include mental health services, therapy, employment support, housing assistance, and more.

Could you be eligible?



If you have a significant mental health or psychosocial disability that needs ongoing, long-term support, you could be eligible for the NDIS.

The decision is ultimately made by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), the agency in charge of the NDIS. They look at every applicant's individual situation to decide who is and who *isn't* eligible.

The NDIS eligibility criteria:

- You have an impairment that is attributable to a psychiatric condition.
- Your impairment is likely to be permanent.
- Your impairment causes substantially reduced functional capacity.
- Your impairment affects your capacity for social or economic participation.

You must also:

- Be an Australian citizen, or have a permanent or Special Category Visa (SCV).
- Be under 65 years old when you apply to join (and over 7).
- Live in an area where the NDIS is available.

Eligible participants have usually explored treatment options referred by their clinician to resolve their mental health condition, and any ongoing treatment is recovery oriented. They are usually not able to do most tasks in at least one of the following areas:

- Communication
- Learning
- Self-care
- Social interaction
- Mobility

HANDY TIPS


It can be overwhelming finding, managing, and organising your supports, especially if you're relatively new to the NDIS. If you'd like some help, talk to us about support coordination. Depending on your eligibility, you may be able to have your own Plan Partners support coordinator (funded by the NDIS) who can help you understand your options and connect you with the best supports for your needs. Just call us on 1300 333 700.

An illustration of a woman with blonde hair and a man with dark hair, both with dark skin, looking at a receipt together. The woman is on the left, wearing a light blue cardigan over a yellow top, and holding a blue shopping basket with a black handle. The man is on the right, wearing a light pink t-shirt and green pants, with a yellow banana bag slung over his shoulder. They are both looking at a white receipt held by the man. The background is a solid teal color.

There are two forms you'll be required to submit to the NDIS:

A standard Access Request Form (alternatively, you can submit your request verbally over the phone. Just call the NDIS on 1800 800 110).

You should work with your GP or health specialist to compile your application, including the required supporting documentation (or what we often refer to as 'evidence').



Access Request Form

Complete this form to apply for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

You complete this form:

- You (the applicant) should complete **Section 1.**
- Your Treating Professional should complete **Section 2.**

Please attach one of the following documents demonstrating eligibility to this document, and provide your explanation of how you used this information to make a decision about your application.

For children younger than 6: Early childhood partners have a nationally coordinated early development screening process for all families with children younger than 6 with developmental delay, or younger than 6 with disability. Children who do not fully meet the definition are screened every day and have developmental delays may also be supported through the early childhood experience.

Please visit our website ([ndis.gov.au](#)) and select **Contact** or call us to get contact details for your local partner in your area.

How to contact us

Do you need help to understand this form?

Do you need help to fill out this form?

If you have any questions or need more information about the NDIS?

You can contact us by:

Phone	(0800) 800 110
Toll free phone	(0800) 800 110
National Relay	(0800) 800 110
Relay Australia	(0800) 800 110
Texting service	(0800) 800 110
Relay Australia	(0800) 800 110
Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)	Call 132 888 on 131-430 and ask for the NDIS on 1800 800 110 as an interpreter is required.

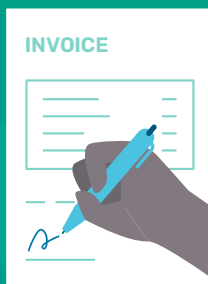
How to return your completed form and evidence to us:

- Email: NDIS@ndis.gov.au
- Mail: GPO Box 98, Canberra ACT 2601
- In person: Take it to your local NDIS office.

[www.ndis.gov.au/
how-apply-ndis/what-
access-request-form](http://www.ndis.gov.au/how-apply-ndis/what-access-request-form)



What evidence do you need to provide?



The evidence you need to submit depends on your mental health disability (and some disabilities don't require you to provide any evidence). Generally, your GP or treating health professional will have to provide documentation to prove that:

You have, or are likely to have, a permanent disability, including information about:

- the type of disability
- the date your disability was diagnosed (if available)
- how long the disability will last
- available treatments (i.e., medications, therapies or surgeries)

How your disability impacts your everyday life in the following areas:

- mobility/motor skills
- communication
- social interaction
- learning
- self-care
- self-management

✓ **HANDY TIPS**

When compiling your evidence, make sure it's:

- Recent.
- Completed by a treating health professional who is relevant to your primary disability (the impairment that has the greatest impacts most on your daily life).
- Confirms your primary disability.
- Confirms the impacts of your disability on the different areas of your life.
- Describes previous treatments and outcomes.
- Describes future treatment options and expected outcomes of those treatments.

What happens after you qualify for the NDIS?



After you receive confirmation that you're eligible, the NDIA will contact you within 21 days to schedule your first planning meeting.

This planning meeting is important because it's your chance to communicate what services and supports you need. Your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) will ask about your short-term and long-term goals, which will form the basis for your NDIS plan and the funding you receive.

It's a good idea to be prepared for your planning meeting, so that you get a plan that accurately reflects your needs and goals:

- Include strong reports from your GP or allied health professional that clearly outline your needs, and the disability-related barriers that might stop you from achieving your NDIS goals.
- Be specific about your goals and what you want included in your plan. For example, perhaps you'd like to feel safe and well at home, you'd like to join the workforce, or you'd like to have better relationships with people.
- Have a broad range of goals to make your plan more versatile when it comes to engaging supports.



✓ **HANDY TIP**

If you have a mental health condition, it's likely that you have 'good days' and 'bad days.' We recommend noting down the activities you have trouble with each day to ensure you don't just cover the support you need on a 'good day'. This will help your LAC understand the full scope of your support needs.

Self-manage, NDIA-manage or plan-manage?

Before your planning meeting, it's worth deciding how you want to manage your plan, so you can let your LAC know. There are three options available to you:

1. Self-managed: You're solely responsible for managing your admin and funds. This option can be quite overwhelming if you're new to the NDIS, have a busy schedule or complex support needs.

2. NDIA-managed: The NDIA manages your plan for you. Take in mind with this option, you can only use service providers that are registered with the NDIA and so you lose access to many smaller, local providers who may be a great fit for you.

3. Plan-managed: A plan manager like Plan Partners takes care of all your admin, including making sure your service providers are paid on time and accurately. All participants are entitled to have a plan manager and it's fully funded by the NDIS at no cost to you. If you'd like to go with this option, be sure to let your LAC know in your planning meeting.



HANDY TIP

Managing the admin that comes with your NDIS plan can take between 5 and 20 hours of your time every week (depending how complex your plan is). If this isn't for you, talk to our friendly team about plan management.

It's important the supports that play a critical role in your life, like psychology, don't stop because of issues with invoicing. We'll make sure your invoices are paid accurately and on time, so that your supports continue uninterrupted, and you can get on with living your life.

You keep full control over your budgets, but we take care of your NDIS invoices, and support you to better manage your NDIS funds and spending.

**Call us today on
1300 333 700.**

What supports are funded by the NDIS?



The NDIS only covers supports they consider to be “reasonable and necessary” i.e., they meet your disability support needs.

In a snapshot, your supports need to be directly related to your mental health condition, offer value for money, and help you achieve your goals or be more active in the community.

The NDIS funds three main categories of supports. And you may receive funding in one, two, or three of these categories, depending on your needs.



1. Core Supports

Core supports are the basic things you need to live your daily life, including cleaning and meal delivery and preparation. Funding for Core supports is flexible, which means you can use one support category's funds to pay for another support – provided they're both Core supports.



2. Capital Supports

Capital supports are larger, one-off items that support you in your daily life. They include specialist disability accommodation, modifications to make your home more suitable to live in, and assistive technology, like wheelchairs or prosthetics.



3. Capacity Building

Capacity building supports aim to help you learn new skills and have more independence, such as finding a job, managing your NDIS plan, or therapy.

Accessing and managing supports



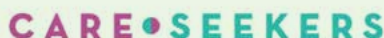
One great thing about the way the NDIS is structured is that as a participant, you have full choice and control over the supports and service providers you use. The downside of this is that participants relatively new to the NDIS can find the categories in their plan confusing and what supports are available to them through their funding

To get some clarity, take a moment to think about what you need from your supports and note down some key points, including:

- What supports you require
- When you need them to start
- How many hours of supports you need
- Any specific characteristics or skills you're looking for in a support worker

Resources to support you

Online care platforms are a great way to connect with mental illness support services, such as allied health professionals, psychosocial recovery coaches, and other providers experienced with mental health and psychosocial disabilities. Here are a few of the more well-known platforms:



Support coordination is about helping you understand your plan, what it covers and how to bring it to life. It's fully funded by the NDIS, but not everyone is eligible.

Our top supports for participants with a mental health or psychosocial disability

Having the right supports in place is critical to the success of your plan and achieving your NDIS goals. Here are several supports recommended by our support coordination team that our customers with psychosocial disability find helpful:



Art therapy

Art therapy offers a creative and safe space for you to explore, express and resolve your emotions and thoughts. It can help you understand which feelings are causing you distress while exploring resolutions that offer relief.

Which category?

Improved Daily Living
(Capacity Building)



Psychology

Psychologists can give you strategies to regulate emotions, manage negative or challenging thoughts and build communication skills. Sometimes, they use evidenced-based psychotherapies such as Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help you face fears, deal with anxiety, or add structure to your day.

Which category?

Improved Daily Living
(Capacity Building)



Support groups

People with a mental health or psychosocial disability can be prone to isolating and withdrawing at times. Local community groups and support groups can help you stay connected to others so that you stay engaged and socially active.

Which category?

Increased Social and Community Participation
(Capacity Building)

✓ **HANDY TIP**

It's important that you trust and get along with the service providers you use because you'll get more out of the experience. If you're not feeling a positive connection with your provider, it's ok to go your separate ways and seek out a new provider that's better suited to you.



Occupational Therapy

Some of our customers tell us working with an Occupational Therapist (OT) has been a huge benefit to their everyday life and mental health. An OT can provide practical ways to work on and improve everyday tasks that can be impacted by complex mental health problems.

Which category?

Consumables
(Capacity Building)



Nutritional meals

A healthy and balanced diet is good for your overall wellbeing and can help you think clearly and feel more alert.

If you could benefit from support with preparing meals, make sure you discuss this with your My NDIS Planner to ensure it is in your plan.

Which category?

Assistance with Daily Life (Core Supports).



Cleaning

A clean and uncluttered home provides a more relaxed and healthy living environment, contributing to a happier, calmer state of mind.

Which category?

Assistance with Daily Life (Core Supports)

Our top supports for participants with a mental health or psychosocial disability



Plan management

Managing the invoices and admin that comes with your NDIS plan can be time-consuming and add unnecessary stress to your life. A plan manager, like Plan Partners, takes this burden away ensuring your providers are paid on time so that your supports continue without disruption.

You keep full control over your budgets, but we take care of your NDIS invoices, and support you to better manage your NDIS funds and spending.

Which category?

Choice and Control (Capacity Building).



Support coordination

Your first and second NDIS plans can be confusing, sometimes a little overwhelming even. Many participants don't understand the categories, funding, or support options available to them during this early phase. A support coordinator has a deep understanding of the NDIS, the disability sector, and local providers. They will work one-on-one with you to help you implement and bring your NDIS plan to life.

Which category?

Support Coordination and Psychosocial Recovery Coaches (Capacity Building).

Psychosocial recovery coaching

A psychosocial recovery coach has mental health knowledge, sometimes even lived experience with a psychological condition. Recovery coaching is similar to support coordination in that it helps you implement your plan and supports, but it tends to be more hands on, focused on supporting you through your recovery journey by setting goals and providing coaching and mentoring.

Which category?

Support Coordination and Psychosocial Recovery Coaches (Capacity Building)



HANDY TIP

Keen to learn more about plan management or support coordination?

Give our friendly team a call on 1300 333 700 today.

Behavioural Support or Psychology?



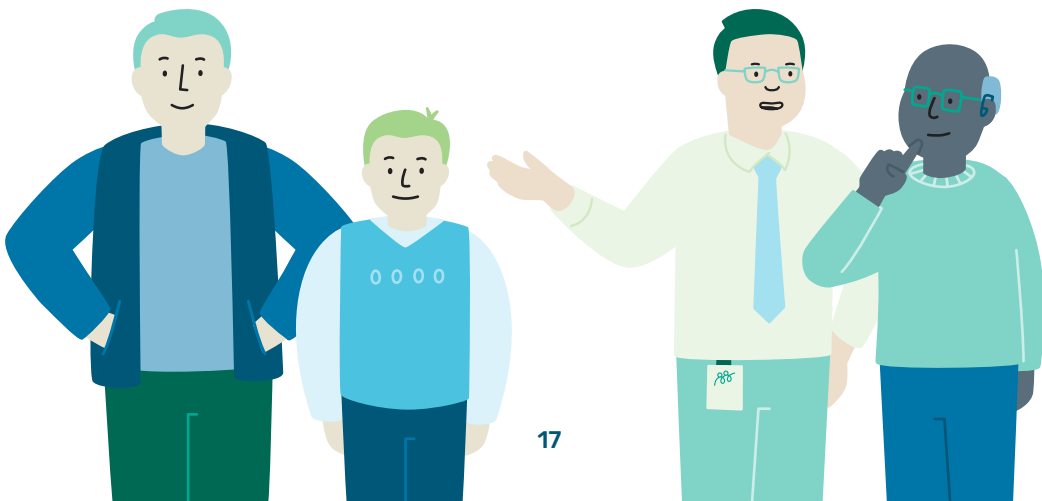
Behavioural support and psychology are two key supports we often get asked about. Because the NDIS will only fund one or the other (not both), participants sometimes get confused which of the two supports is right for them.

What's the difference between behavioural support and psychology?

Behavioural support and psychology are related supports but differ in their focus and scope. Behavioural support primarily focuses on specific behaviours and their underlying causes. It uses techniques like positive reinforcement, behaviour analysis, and interventions to manage and improve behaviour.

Psychology, on the other hand, offers a broader scope of expertise. It includes areas like counselling, cognitive psychology, and social psychology. Psychologists look at not only behaviour but also the underlying thoughts, emotions, and mental processes that contribute to it.

Your GP or health specialist can advise which support is better suited to your needs.



The importance of having a Crisis Action Plan in place



When you have psychosocial disability, crises can and do happen. And having the right support in place can make all the difference.

It's not easy anticipating when a crisis may occur. Sometimes, it can be triggered by an event that exacerbates your condition or, in extreme cases, brings about psychosis. Having a clear and proactive safety plan in place helps you and your support workers understand what to do when a crisis occurs.

An action plan typically includes

- Triggers and warning signs to look out for
- Details about your key supports
- Information about your condition for healthcare professionals or emergency services
- De-escalation techniques for yourself and anyone who may be with you
- Mental health crisis phone lines and response teams

✓ **HANDY TIP**

If you have support coordination with us, your dedicated support coordinator can work with you to:

- prepare a Crisis Action Plan that's relative to your supports and needs.
- provide helpful resources to reach out to in the event of a crisis.

Talk to us today about support coordination on 1300 333 700.



Who are Plan Partners?

Sometimes, it feels like you're navigating the NDIS all by yourself. It can be confusing and overwhelming. Plan Partners are one of Australia's trusted NDIS plan management and support coordination providers. We offer a true partnership where you can rely on our expertise and support to achieve your goals, however big or small.

Plan management with Plan Partners

Having us as your plan manager is a bit like having a bookkeeper helping you with your finances (only we're fully funded by the NDIS). You keep full control over your budgets, but we take care of your NDIS invoices, and support you to better manage your funds and spending.

Support coordination with Plan Partners

With Plan Partners, you get a dedicated support coordinator with deep knowledge of the disability sector, local providers and the NDIS. Your support coordinator will work alongside you to help you get the most out of your NDIS plan, supports and budgets.

To learn more about our services, reach out to our friendly team today on 1300 333 700.



Frequently Asked Questions

Does the NDIS cover long-term mental illness?

Yes, the NDIS can support you if you have long-term mental illness if it:

- is permanent or likely to be permanent (long-term).
- significantly affects your ability to participate in daily activities.

Does the NDIS cover bipolar?

Yes. The NDIS takes a person-centered approach, which considers your individual needs and circumstances. To access NDIS support, you'll need to demonstrate that your condition significantly affects your life and that you require support to maintain or improve your daily functioning. We recommend consulting with an NDIS professional such as a Local Area Coordinator (LAC) for help.

Does the NDIS cover depression or anxiety?

Yes. Eligibility is determined based on the impact your condition has on your daily life. The NDIS takes a person-centered approach, which considers your individual needs and circumstances. To access NDIS support, you'll need to demonstrate that your condition significantly affects your life and that you require support to maintain or improve your daily functioning.

Do I need a mental health assessment to access the NDIS?

Accessing the NDIS doesn't strictly require a mental health assessment, but it can help. Eligibility is determined by various factors, including the impact of your disability on your daily life. To apply, you'll need to provide relevant documentation and collaborate with NDIS professionals like LACs for guidance.

Can mental health referral plans be used as evidence of diagnosis?

Mental health referral plans alone may not suffice as diagnosis of your condition to access the NDIS. Comprehensive evidence, including formal diagnosis from specialists, assessments, and treatment records, is typically needed.

Am I eligible for the NDIS if I'm being treated for drug and alcohol dependency and also have a psychosocial disability?

To qualify for the NDIS, you must show reduced function due to a mental health condition. Even if you have addiction issues, you can still qualify if your functional impairment persists alongside them.

Can I appeal if the NDIS rejects my Access Request?

If your access request is denied, you can request an internal review and

provide any supporting evidence. If you're unsuccessful through the internal review, you can appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for a final decision on NDIS funding eligibility.

I'm unhappy with the NDIS plan I received, what can I do?

If you're unhappy with your new NDIS plan, you can request an 'internal review' within three months to make changes.

What happens if my support needs change while I'm getting the NDIS?

You can submit a 'Change of Circumstances' form to the NDIS. If approved, this may lead to a formal plan review. To maximise your chances of receiving the supports you want during the review, gather ample supporting evidence for your planning meeting.

Can I access physical supports such as fitness groups/physiotherapy to assist with my mental health?

As an NDIS participant, you can access physical supports like fitness groups and physiotherapy as capacity building supports, as the NDIS recognises the connection between physical well-being and mental health. If needed, include these supports in your NDIS plan after discussing your goals with your planner or coordinator.

How do I have physical supports added to my plan when my plan is built around my psychosocial disability?

We recommend discussing your needs with your NDIS support team, including your planner or Local Area Coordinator (LAC). They can help you understand how physical supports can be beneficial in managing your psychosocial disability. Gather any necessary medical or professional evidence that demonstrates the relevance and benefits of these physical supports to your mental health. This evidence can help make a stronger case for including them in your plan.

Can I access community run groups rather than disability pacific groups only?

Yes, you're not limited to disability-specific groups. When planning your NDIS supports, discuss your desire to be part of community-run groups with your NDIS planner or local area coordinator. They can help you explore options, identify suitable community activities, and allocate funding or supports as needed.

Not eligible for the NDIS? Alternative resources and supports



Sometimes, the NDIA decides that your support needs are better met by another service system. In this case, they will try to reach out and contact you to explain why you're not eligible.

You should receive a letter confirming their decision that includes the reasons why and what you can do next. They can also help you connect with a Local Area Coordinator (LAC), who will be able to walk you through some

alternative support services.

The NDIS lists the resources and support options available if you're not eligible for the NDIS on their website www.ndis.gov.au.

Crisis Support Lines

There are also numerous support lines that operate 24/7 if, at any time, you need to reach out and speak to someone.



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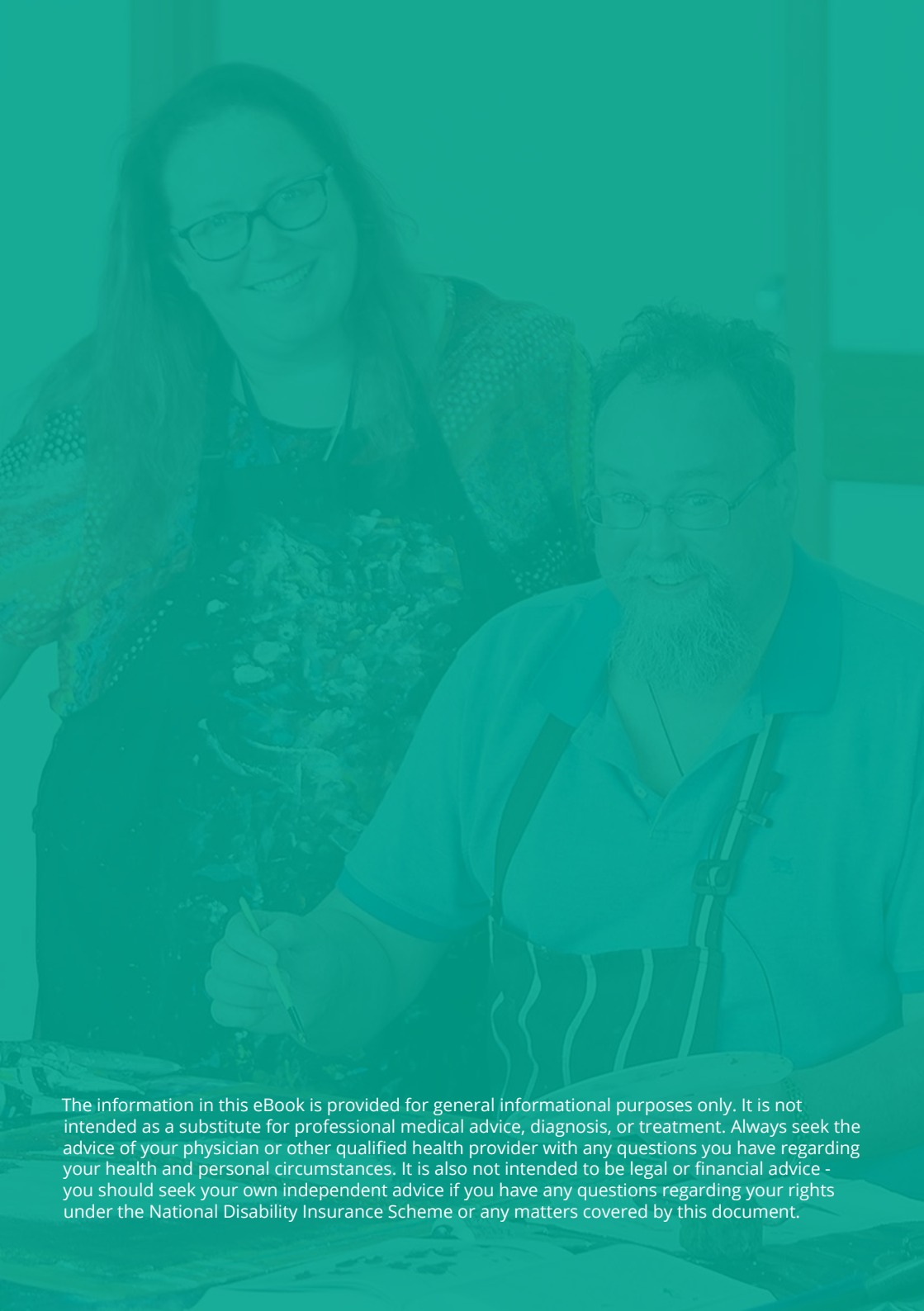
1300 224 636



1800 551 800



1300 659 467



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Customer Testimonial

"As both my plan manager and support coordinator, Plan Partners have been the best, I don't have to worry about the admin side of my plan. It gets done and it gets done in a good fashion. They monitor my funding and voice their concerns if anything is going wrong.

They also have their Fast Payment System, which means invoices gets paid in about 2 days. Amy, my support coordinator, has been great, we have so much fun together. She's really caring, which is what you want with a support coordinator. She knows what she's doing but has a laugh about it too – otherwise it would be boring! We have a great professional friendship."

Plan Partners' customer, Matt



Have a question or perhaps you'd like to sign up for our services?

Our team are here to help 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday.



Live chat:
planpartners.com.au
Mon to Fri
8am to 8pm
(Melbourne time)



Call us:
1300 333 700
Mon to Fri
8am to 8pm
(Melbourne time)



Email:
info@planpartners.com.au



Plan Partners
Together, it's possible

planpartners.com.au