# Foundation Supports Introduction Webinar Transcript

>> Hello and welcome to this webinar on foundational supports. My name is Mel Butcher, and I am the director of impact and engagement at The Social Deck. The Social Deck are working with the Commonwealth and States and Territories to help coordinate and deliver foundational supports consultations, and to share information about what foundational supports might look like.

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands we are meeting on today. I know that people are joining this webinar all across the country. I am privileged to be coming to you from the beautiful lands of the Kabi Kabi people in Queensland, and I want to give thanks for being on their traditional lands, and acknowledge the connection and care that First Nations people have had with land, water and live here for many thousands of years. I pay my respects to elders past and present, and extend this respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending the webinar.

To ensure that today's webinar is accessible for everyone, we have Auslan interpreters that will be on the screen at all times. Live captioning can also be accessed directly in zoom, or via a separate screen. To see the captions in zoom, depending on the device you use, you can select CC at the bottom or top of your screen. We will post the link to access captions by a separate screen in the chat now.

We are excited to have more than 2000 registrations for today's webinar, and we hope this will provide the community with some more information about foundational supports in the consultation process. To be clear, today is an informational webinar. We will introduce what and they shall supports is about, and tell you about the consultation process and the ways you can have your say. So we will be posting some information in the chat, but we are not using chat for people to have their say today. Just because we have so many people joining us.

But we do have upcoming online workshops very soon to start our conversations with community, along with a number of other opportunities to get involved but I will talk about later in the webinar.

The information recovered today is available now on the DS as Engage website. -- DSS. The address for that is engage.dss.gov.au/foundationalsupports. We put this web address in the chat.

The webinar is also being recorded, and you will be able to see it on the DSS Engage website soon after the event. You will hear shortly from the Federal Minister for Social Services, the honourable Amanda Rishworth MP, about what the government is considering when it comes to foundational supports. You will also hear from the Department of Social Services and other key speakers today about what these supports might look like.

We want to acknowledge there is some uncertainty and concern in the community about changes, and specifically about foundational supports, since the NDIS review released its report in December last year. It is important to take care of yourself, so if you do need to reach out to someone you can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14. And we will post some more specific support lines in the chat section now.

We hope that today's webinar information will help to explain more about foundational supports and provide some clarity about the consultation process.

Now I would like to play a message from Minister Rishworth.

(Captioned video plays)

>> Thank you. This is Mel Butcher speaking again. I would like to let you know who is speaking and what we will talk about today. First we have Lisha Jackman, branch manager at the Department of Social Services, to give an overview of foundational supports and what governments are considering. Then we will hear from Jane Britt, disability expert for The Social Deck, about the importance of general supports for information, advice and referral. After Jane, Dr George tell a porous full speed about the importance of capacity building for individuals, families and carers, and communities. Jane will then speak about why it is important for people with disability to be involved in this consultation. And lastly I will provide some more details on how a range of people and stakeholders can get involved in the consultation process. Now I will hand over to Lisha.

>> Great, thank you. I am Lisha Jackman, a branch manager in the Commonwealth Department of social services. I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, and their connections to land, water, culture and community. I pay my respects to the elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today. I am joining you from Ngunnawal land.

What I wanted to cover today is some high-level scene setting. As you may have heard from the Minister's introduction, foundational supports were one of a number of recommendations the independent review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme or NDIS made in their report, which was released publicly in December last year.

These are supports that states, Territory and Commonwealth governments agree should be additional investment in. In looking at how to improve the NDIS and better support people with disability, the independent panel found you also need to make changes to the systems around the NDIS. Foundational supports are specific supports that are in addition to mainstream services, and supports access through the NDIS.

Foundational supports are intended to sit outside the NDIS, so the NDIS is no longer the only lifeboat in the ocean for people with disability. We know many people with disability are not on the NDIS, and some people need more help than what they can get through mainstream services in the community. This is where foundational supports would assist. By taking part in the consultations that follow today's webinar, you will be contributing your ideas to the design of additional supports right across Australia.

Foundational supports are being designed and developed by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments and we are sharing the costs 50-50. Services and supports are expected to roll out in stages, commencing from a letter next year, and this will be phased. When and how services will be rolled out needs to be agreed between governments, but first what we need to do is work with you on what these supports look at.

To be clear, we are not starting with a blank page. The review engaged with thousands of people and provided us with broad guidance around what they thought foundational supports should look like. What we're doing now is adding more detail, figuring out what this might look like in practice.

Before we continue, I want to acknowledge there may be some concerns around what these changes will mean for people's current access to NDIS funded disability supports. I want to emphasise that the NDIS is here to stay. Foundational supports are additional supports to be designed and delivered alongside the NDIS and mainstream services. Any rule changes would not take place until relevant foundational supports are in place. This way the legislation does not allow for people to fall through the cracks.

Today is to talk about what we are calling general supports. This is a category of support under foundational supports, and there are two broad categories. There is general supports which includes things like information and guidance, peer support and capacity building. In general supports will be available for people with disability, and where appropriate their families and carers. These services are available to people who may or may not be accessing the NDIS.

Then there are targeted supports for people that have additional support needs but don't need to access the NDIS to have those needs met. These targeted supports would focus on helping certain groups of people where the need is greatest. And for people with disabilities that are not accessing or eligible for support delivered through the NDIS.

Initially these consultations will focus on the first kind of support, general supports. And to start we are consulting on a few of the different kinds of supports that fall under this category of general, and there is information, advice and capacity building supports. These supports would be designed to help people with disability participate more fully in their community and go beyond the reasonable adjustments expected for inclusive and accessible mainstream and community supports.

Services and supports would focus on helping people with disability, parents, carers and kin of people with disability, and building the capacity of the broader community. It might include things like having access to quality information about disability rights and help finding services, and this information and advice will need to be relevant to individuals based on their location, experience with disability, and intersectional identity. They might also include things like access to support and tools that can help individuals to connect with social networks, build community connections, and be able to advocate on issues that impact them. This might also include things like peer support groups, self advocacy and workshops.

They would also potentially be funded projects that assist community organisations and non-government public services and activities to be more inclusive and responsive to the needs of people with disability, and to improve accessibility and inclusion.

Your views will help shape how these supports and services should be designed and delivered. You may be familiar with a great program called information linkages and capacity building. General supports will expand on the kinds of programs and activities delivered under ILC. Dr George Taleporos will speak more in this late letter, and this is a -- more on this later.

In terms of what is next, you can contribute to the consultation process and there are a variety of ways you can contribute. The Social Deck will talk more about these next, and I want to be clear that these will involve interactive sessions.

From the feedback we receive from these consultations, we will work closely with states and territories to refine foundational supports ahead of any services commencing. This is the beginning of consultation, and will cover additional topics as consultation progresses, and we look forward to working closely with you and hearing your views.

I would like to thank you for registering your interest in contributing to these consultations, and importantly for providing your advice, expertise and lived experience to help shape the design and delivery of foundational supports. Thank you so much and I will hand back to you, Mel.

>> Thank you, Mel speaking. Now I will introduce Jane Britt who is working with the Social Deck and is a disability consultant working across the sector in policy. Jane currently serves on two boards and will be the facilitator for a lot of the generational sports and consultation activities.

Will hand over to you now, Jane.

>> Thank you, I'd like to acknowledge I am speaking on Yuggera and Turrbal country today. Was the first thing you do when you need information for anything. Do you ask a friend or family member your question. Now I will ask you to imagine scenarios where you need more detailed situation.

Would you need to know about finding somewhere to live, what transport is there, what services can support you. Other community groups you are interested in joining?

Would you need for disability service support for the first time. Who provides the support what kind of support is at and how will you get there? And this one is really important. Do you know what your rights are when using the support or service? Where would you go to look for information on understanding your rights?

Finally, if you have a natural disaster happening like a flood or a bush fire near you, what is the first thing you would do to find out more about it and whether you need to prepare to evacuate, or what else you need to do to be safe. Do you turn on the radio or the television or do you ring friends? Do you use the internet to search for more information or use an app? Do you turn to disability community groups and services that might communicate the way you need to find out the information you require.

I will return to the scenarios later as someone who is Deafblind, what scenarios are needed in each scenario. There's many reasons we need information, advice and referral, we need a trusted source of information to help make decisions about the supports we need in our lives.

Empowers us to give us the knowledge we need to choose how, when and where we connect to and access our community.

It enables independence and autonomy to make decisions, what supports we want and how we might access them. Especially when seeking information about accessing different mainstream, community, or disability specific services. Information and advice have better understanding of our rights for people with disabilities which we helped to sell advocate for our needs especially when things don't go to plan.

We also have community public services to be more responsive to our needs. We will have a referral service offering look like? It can take many forms, to support different communication needs, for example a single website and online chart or a phone service. It may be in-person or physical resources available, it may include the uplift of existing resources.

Information curry state and national levels and details on what is available in different areas.

We know that when we have the information and referral setting in place, we wanted to be available and tailored to diverse communities. This is where you come in, which brings me to my next point.

Some scenarios are put in the beginning were personal ones, these are scenarios where we need information and an example around needing access to information during an emergency. I'm Deafblind to my access and communication needs are in large print and the spoken material I prefer to see the person speaking to be able to lip read.

I do not want visual material. During the pandemic we had a lot of visual information including how to put on a face mark and it was visually presented. With the natural disaster example a map with the fire location is not example but a screen reader tested list of street names and park locations updated in real time provides accurate information may enable me to make accessible evacuation plans. Now, there's times when I need access to information to advocate for myself.

For example moving through the community where I needed to get past and obstacle to get past tactile objects on the ground which I use with my cane. And its use across tactile markers, and we have barbecues as much as the last person and it smells delicious, however I was not able to get past it and we want to know what the rules are to see if it is off the tactile market.

So, this I went searching for information, there was no acceptable source of information to find out what rules there were around a particular situation. I end up picking up the phone and ringing local council and government to find out what my rights were. In that case I had a letter in a safe location. While this is not a support or service it's relevant with supports or services. In my example it wasn't easy, and the source of information would have really helped me in various formats like large print which helps me and enormously to know what I need to save for the information we have the barbecue shifted. I just don't want the information in an accessible format I also wanted easy to read. And I can see that we have frameworks and policies which is important to know but from a personal view, I want to know and understand why it is important and the legislation policies to exist and how we advocate for my rights.

This is why work on foundational support is extremely important and why we need to hear from as many people as possible. I will return to this later.

>> Thank you Jane, that was fantastic and we really appreciate you sharing the insights with us. Now I'd like to introduce Doctor George Taleporos. He has a physical disability and is a leading advocate for self-directed supports and disability rights. He hosts the popular podcast on NDIS called reasonable and necessary and is a member of the NDIS Independent Advisory Council, a board member and an independent chair of Every Australian Counts. He hardly needs an introduction, really, Doctor Tele porous gives regular commentary on disability rights issues on a range of platforms including the conversation, there guardian and I am happy to have him with us today. Over to you, George.

>> Thank you, I appreciate that. Thank you everyone for coming along today. This is not the regular environment, I tend to be in conversation with people and hearing different perspectives, so a lot of people are disappointed (inaudible) people here today. But with what Jane had to say, it is definitely a tough act to follow.

I'm on Wurundjeri land and APAM respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

I'm grateful to be here, the support is one that I have had first-hand and I know how important they are for people with disabilities, for their families, carers, and the wider community.

Like a lot of you, when I think about (inaudible) and I think about the NDIS plan and capacity building, and that includes things like OT and that kind of thing. While that is not what we are talking about. In the context of foundation support, capacity building is about empowering people. If we empower people with the tools to move independently and exercise, it's about control and for active participants in our community.

Now, use a lot of technology in my life, I think it's fantastic. And (inaudible) text-to-speech software. I'm just going to turn that on now and that will do the talking for me. So I will just get my assistant to get the microphone.

>> Capacity building supports are always meant to be central to the NDIS and also for people who are not on the NDIS. It is fair to say that capacity building support has not been rolled out the way that we had hoped for.

We need to do much better when it comes to delivering capacity building support, and today's forum is about sharing ideas on how we can do better this time.

It might help to think about three key streams of capacity building support. Individuals, families and carers, and the wider community. These are crucial to ensuring capacity building supports are tailored to the unique needs of each room. For individuals capacity building supports focus on autonomy, self advocacy and rights awareness. These supports must be led by people with disabilities and supporters to understand and assert our rights, to take control of our rights in community. This might look like peer support groups, group information sessions or leading to development programs.

It's about reducing isolation and creating networks where people with disabilities can share experiences, learn from each other, and be empowered to advocate for themselves.

From my personal experience, I know how transformative this can be. As someone who self manages NDIS supports, peer networks can be essential. They provide me with a safe space where I can ask, how do I solve this problem? The supports help people become more confident in matching supports and taking control of our lives.

Secondly, for families, capacity building should be about empowering families to understand how to support their loved ones in exercising independence and making decisions.

In practice, this might look like peer support groups where families can connect, learn and share strategies.

It's about giving families the tools to enable loved ones with disabilities to lead with dignity and independence fostering autonomy and inclusion in chosen community peace.

At the community level, capacity building is about ensuring our communities, organisations and services are truly inclusive. This is our right. People with disabilities have the right to participate in all aspects of community life, and when communities are inaccessible, it is not just an inconvenience. It forces people into segregated settings and leads to isolation, abuse, and neglect.

We can also build capacity by sharing best practices. This means that the lessons learned from successful community projects will not stay local. They will be shared and scaled up to benefit the entire country. This approach will ensure that no community is left behind. And that every organisation has access to the knowledge and resources to build inclusive, accessible spaces for people with disabilities.

Capacity building supports also needs to address our intersectionality. Intersectionality means that people can face different challenges based on who they are in more than one way. For example, a person might face difficulties because they are a woman, because they have a disability, and because of their cultural background all at the same time.

Capacity building supports must be designed to meet the needs of diverse groups within the disability community, whether that is people with intellectual disabilities, First Nations people with disabilities, or those who face multiple ways of disadvantage. It's about recognising that people with disabilities are not all the same. We have different needs, experiences and identities.

We also need a strong focus on rights awareness and leadership development. Capacity building supports should equip people with disabilities to understand their rights, to self advocate and take on leadership roles in their communities. Whether it is through peer support, supported decision making, or self advocacy training, this is about giving people the tools we need to step into positions of power and influence.

For communities, this means building the capacity of local organisations to deliver accessible, inclusive services. It's about creating environments where people with disabilities are not only included but are leaders in shaping the spaces we live in.

>> Though as we look ahead to reshape capacity building supports, let's make sure that they are led and driven by people with disabilities and our families. Let's ensure that our communities, families and organisations can advocate for and uphold the rights of people with disabilities. Because when people with disabilities are empowered, we are respected, and our communities are inclusive, we all benefit. Thank you.

>> Thank you so much, Dr George. We really appreciate that and your insides. That was a fantastic speech. -- Insides. We will come back to you a bit later for some reflections. I would like to hand back to Jane who will talk about the importance of being involved in designing foundational supports. Jane.

>> Thank you. I think Dr George has touched on some really good points around why we need to be involved, but there is more to be added... Whether it be having a social life by going to a community group like a choir of playing a sport at a local sporting centre. It doesn't matter what it is, we are the experts in what works for us.

We need to hear diverse perspectives for what information formats you need, how that information is explained to make it easy for you to understand and use, and what is currently working well in the information you do have access to, as well as what is missing.

We also know it is a complex environment right now with a lot of things changing at once. And that having clear information is something everyone has been asking for about all the changes. This includes foundational supports, and how information is provided. So what would make it clear and accessible to you? We know there are geographic differences for what is available and what is needed. I am from country New South Wales, from the bunch along nation, and I know what is needed and available there is different to what is needed and available up here in the Ankara country, in the inner city. -- Jagera.

We want to make sure we get everyone's views on what is needed no matter where you are. Pastor have trust in the information we are accessing, we need to be front and centre in creating it. I know I have more trust in the information I know has been created by other people with disability, with them leading how things are done all the way from design to implementation.

We may not all have the same point of view about what is needed and how it is needed, but all views are important to be heard to make sure we get to an outcome that works for most people.

>> thank you, Jane. I should say that both Jane and Dr George are on an advisory group for the consultations and have been providing excellent advice.

It is Mel speaking. We are now at the final part of our webinar. Before we go back for some reflections. I hope you have all learned a little bit more about the additional supports and why these are important as well is why it is important to be involved as we begin the consultations.

Now I would really like to provide you some different, some information about the different opportunities and ways for people to contribute.

You might prefer to engage with us in different ways. You might prefer to do things in writing, where you have more time to think about your responses, or you might want to share your ideas with others or comment on other people's ideas, or you might want to join an event online or in person if we are visiting your area. During this consultation process he can contribute in any of these ways. -- You. Today the Department of Social Services released the general supports consultation paper. This is now available on the DSS Engage website. We links to that a bit earlier, but we will put the link in the chat again.

As Alicia mentioned, general supports is the initial focus of consultations. This paper gives you some more background and includes some questions, the sorts of things we will be asking people about over the next couple of months.

Along with the paper there is an online questionnaire. It mostly has questions that allow you to share your ideas in writing. But in the questionnaire you can also skip the questions and just upload a document or audio or video file. So you can develop your response in your own words and format and send it to us there, or you could send it to us via email.

If you are happy to share your ideas with others, we also have, are going to have very shortly, and online ideas wall set up. Ideas posted here are similar to what people might share in face-to-face events and it allows you to see what others are thinking and comment on that as well as share your own ideas. That will be open very shortly and it will be the information will also be on the DSS Engage website.

There are a couple of ways we will hold events, and all of our events will be facilitated by a person with disability. We will have some online roundtables. These are discussions with other people online where you will have facilitators to help you contribute. You will be able to speak at those or use the chat, or there might be other ways you can have your say within those online roundtables. The days and times for these are already published on the DSS Engage with that.

We will also be having on person workshops and roundtable discussions in some locations throughout the country also. They will go from early October to late November and we will shortly publish a schedule of these on the DSS Engage website.

There will be a few types of in-person events in each location that we are visiting. There is a workshop that is open to everyone with an interest in foundational supports. That includes the disability sector, providers, community organisations, people with disability, family, carers and kin. There will also be some in-person roundtables that are just for people with disability and potentially their advocates if they would like to bring an advocate, so we can make sure we prioritise and hear from people who will be directly affected by changes.

Because this is a Commonwealth and State and Territory process we need to make sure we visit and have events in all states and territories. We will also be attending some specific events that are already happening such as the Loud and Clear Conference on the Sunshine Coast for people with intellectual disability so we can talk to people where they are already engaging. And we will be holding in person yarning circles and other discussions both online and face-to-face from people from specific amenities such as First Nations, people from culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTQIA+ and other groups. We also welcome requests from groups who represent specific groups who would like to request a specific session.

Our priority is to make sure that those that don't often attend events, online or in person, argument safe and inclusive ways to engage and contribute as well. -- Are given.

We think it's really important to be clear and honest that this is a community consultation and not a codesign process. The purpose of this stage of engagement is to consult with a really wide range of people that might be affected by changes, so that governments can listen to different perspectives in the community. And especially listening to those with disability and family and carers and kin about what they need. This will then help to inform the future design of foundational supports.

The timeframe for this phase of consultation is from now until the end of November. And then during December we will analyse what we have heard and write a report for governments to consider. You will be able to follow along with what people are saying on the public forums like the ideas wall. And we will hope to share some key themes along the way.

As Jane and George have said, we encourage you to engage with us and tell us what you think.

Now I would like to go back to Jane and George to ask if they have any further reflections on the process. It could be around the consultation, or foundational supports, at this time. So Dr George?

>> Thank you. Can you hear me? OK, great. I just want to say that this is really exciting. Because I think that we, when we set up the NDIS, we almost thought there would be this other element that would be vital to ensure that communities were accessible and people both in and outside of the NDIS got the supports they needed.

And I think that it's a really important opportunity for people to come forward and to say, "Hey, in the last 10 years, the ILC program has done really well in these areas, and it didn't do that well in these areas." So we can look at it and go, "What can we do better?" And I think we will all agree that not everything has been perfect, and that there are opportunities in this second go at foundational supports, which is essentially where we are at now. (inaudible)

I also want to say that the NDIS made up this word, foundational supports. (inaudible) it is not a new concept. The idea that mainstream services will be accessible and there will be supports in the community, and that they can be accessed if you want and the NDIS, that was always the plan. -- Were not in the NDIS. Even though there is a new word, the community has always been behind this. It's in the delivery and the design and this is the chance for both of those. What do you think, Jane?

>> I think, what I would say having listened to everything today is to get involved. No matter if you have a couple of things to say and you may not feel like you have much, we want to hear with feedback and foundational supports. This is the chance to shape the future. Any should be encouraged to provide feedback no matter what it is. I'm speaking personally, I would like to hear from as many people as possible. I want to learn from you and your experiences and how we meet diverse needs and who is accessing the foundational supports. I'm looking forward to engaging with many of you as you go around the country, and am looking forward to what you have to tell us. Get involved, no matter what you have heard about the various ways you can provide feedback, whatever is accessible to you provide feedback that way but we want to hear from as many people as possible.

>> Fantastic, thank you so much again Jane and Doctor George. We appreciate you being here today and the advice that you have along the way and you will continue to do so and we really appreciate that.

Building from what Jane was saying also, if you can't see a way to engage or questions, some people may have questions in the webinar. Please email us and the Social Deck team will get back to you to help with your contribution where you can.

Our email is in the chat and I will read it out.
: foundationalsupports@thesocialdeck.com

Thank you again for joining us at this hour, are reminded that a webinar will be available. Thank you to the Minister and George and Jane for giving the information and the the thoughts and ideas on this really important program. Thank you for joining us and have a great afternoon.

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