

To whom it may concern

NDIS ins and outs list

We represent a disability peer network group in Whyalla SA. We are made up of people with a range of disabilities and ages and carers. We have discussed your Ins and outs lists with our group and decided to give you, our feedback.

Reading about your 1 to 3 ratios our members are concerned that this would mean people living independently who required support at home or who were planning on living independently might be forced to live with others in shared or group style accommodation to be fully supported. Our group believes that everyone should have the right to choose who they live with and how they live, like everyone else in the community. Most people only choose to share or live with people they love, or friends and we know even living with those you choose to live with can be tricky so living with others just because you each have a disability can be a safety risk, a health risk and can limit their independence and emotional wellbeing.

We were also concerned about using funds for taxis and how this situation is different for people in regional areas. We have limited public transport that is very hard to use for people in wheelchairs or with mobility issues or those who find it hard to keep to time schedules as our public transport is not regular so if you miss a bus, you will be waiting for another hour or so. In the yes list it mentions you can use a taxi to go to school or work. It doesn't mention using taxis to go to appointments like doctors or therapy or to go to Centrelink to sort out issues or to participate in community activities like clubs or groups or events or to visit family and friends. We have members in the group who are unable to drive who get \$68 per week to use for taxis. In our town this wouldn't cover one trip to the Main Street or beach (a 10 min trip) where a lot of community activities take place on weekends when taxi prices are higher. To go from anywhere in our town to the supermarket and Centrelink in the middle of the city during the day costs around \$18 one way and also around 10 mins. Most trips unless walking distance would cost over \$15. So, \$68 means you don't leave home without outside help. Many use support workers to take them shopping or to go to events when they mainly just need help to travel there. It would be cheaper to fund more taxi trips than hire a support worker to take them.

Our members like most people enjoy traveling. The no list seemed to prohibit some costs associated with traveling for people who need extra support while on a holiday or traveling for things like specialist appointments in Adelaide. Traveling is a regular part of life in regional areas. We must travel often for basic services as well as enjoyment and emotional wellbeing. Support workers have costs that must be paid by someone when traveling, these costs should not be paid by workers who are working, not there for enjoyment and should not be paid by the participant who usually must use their saving to afford to go away. These costs include support hours, accommodation for support workers, entry to events or venues and transport tickets. These costs are higher for regional participants as the travel distance is further and most things happen in the city.

The no list included mobile phones and "jewelry" such as smart watches. While these are not needed for most, they are life changing for others. Some of our members use smart watches from medication alerts to tell them when to take medication or lifesaving fall alerts to call an ambulance if they lose balance and fall over. A phone would be out of reach, but the watch is always close. Others in our group use their phone connected to their wheelchair to communicate with a communication app. Without this they can't be understood, a large iPad

would be impractical. One member told of her child who uses a smart watch at school to discreetly tell him when it was time to go to the toilet. This has been huge for the child, giving them back dignity, privacy and independence so other children don't know when he is reminded to go. Having an adult tell him or a reminder on an iPad would not be private or appropriate.

We understand that some things should be a hard no. illegal things like illegal drugs and alcohol should of course not be supported by the NDIA. However, most things on the no list should be a no for most not for all. We are happy for a "maybe not list" or a "restricted list" for things that you would need to fight harder to prove were needed due to your personal circumstances. We think there should be a panel of experts with lived experience who understand there is a place between black and white. please keep the NDIS to be person-centered. Please make sure there are ways to be flexible for those who need it, even if that need is unique or unusual. Everyone matters even if they are different. it's the whole point of the NDIS

Thank you for consulting the disability community. Please make all future decisions via the Co-design process in the future as you will get a better result when you include people living the experience.

Written Rachel Barlow and Carrie Kowald on behalf and with the input of a Whyalla Disability Peer Group.

To contact us please phone [REDACTED]