One big difference to lots of lives

An introduction to DisabilityCare Australia
‘I’m learning to dance and love whirling around the dance floor.’

Ryan
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What is this booklet about?

This booklet introduces DisabilityCare Australia, the national disability insurance scheme, and explains:

- what we provide
- who we can help
- how we work with people with disability, families, carers and providers
- where to find more information.

What is DisabilityCare Australia?

DisabilityCare Australia is a new way of providing community linking and individualised support for people with permanent and significant disability, their families and carers. It provides choice and control and a whole-of-life approach to the support needed for people to live more independently and work towards achieving their goals.

DisabilityCare Australia is the insurance that gives us all peace of mind to know that, if necessary, we can have the support that is right for us.

‘I’m looking for a scheme that is flexible and realistic about what people with disabilities actually need to live a good life.’

George
What do we provide?

We understand that everyone’s needs, preferences and aspirations are different. That’s why we provide to eligible people a flexible, whole-of-life approach to the support needed to pursue their goals and aspirations and participate in daily life.

We provide information and referrals

Anyone with or affected by disability can ask us for information and referrals, including the families and carers of people with disability.

Through this service we:

- provide easier and better access to information about the most effective support options
- refer people to relevant disability, mainstream and community services and supports
- refer people to supports to help build their individual capacity through activities such as peer support and skills development
- link people with local support groups, clubs, associations, initiatives or programs.

We help people plan their individualised support

We help DisabilityCare Australia participants develop individual support plans that can include mainstream, community, informal and reasonable and necessary funded supports such as:

- one-off supports, for example equipment
- personal support for daily living
- early intervention services
- local area coordination
- supports to achieve greater independence and community participation.
Individual support plans

Individual support plans provide people with choice and control over the support they receive. A plan may include familiar supports, such as help with certain activities or aids and equipment to maximise mobility and independence. Supports may be more flexible and innovative, based on a person’s needs, goals, aspirations and family environment. Importantly, support plans will make sure the valuable support provided by families and carers can be sustained.

We build community awareness and capacity

We aim to improve community awareness of the issues that affect the social and economic participation of people with disability, and build the community’s capacity to make it easier for them to participate in everyday life.

All Australians can access general information about disability supports in the community through our website, our offices in launch areas, and by phone through our information line. We will also develop close working relationships with other key supports in the community such as social, health, business and regional networks.
Where is DisabilityCare Australia available?

We are introducing DisabilityCare Australia in stages from July 2013. This is because it’s a big change, and we want to get it right and make it sustainable.

From 1 July 2013, DisabilityCare Australia begins in:
- the Hunter area of New South Wales for people up to age 65
- the Barwon area of Victoria for people up to age 65
- South Australia for children aged 0 to 14
- Tasmania for youth aged 15 to 24.

From 1 July 2014, DisabilityCare Australia will start in the Australian Capital Territory, and the Barkly region of the Northern Territory.

We will progressively roll out the full scheme from July 2016, including across Queensland.

More information about where and when DisabilityCare Australia is available is on our website at disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au
Who is eligible?

If you want information or need a referral
Anyone with or affected by disability, including families and carers, can contact us for information and referrals. More information about contacting us is on page 19.

If you need an individual support plan
You may be able to receive an individual support plan if:

- you are under 65 years of age
- you are an Australia citizen, a permanent resident, or New Zealand citizen who is a Protected Special Category Visa holder
- during the first stage of the scheme, you live in a launch area and meet the specific age requirements for that area (see page 7).

You also need to meet the disability requirements:

- you have a permanent impairment and
- you cannot join in activities or do things without assistive technology, equipment (other than commonly used items like glasses) or home modifications or
- you usually require help from others to join in or do things.

Or you need to meet the early intervention requirements:

- you or your child have a disability that is likely to be permanent or
- your child has a developmental delay and
- there is evidence that shows getting early supports will reduce how much help you or your child need to do things in the future.
How do you check if you are eligible?

To find out what is available to you, you can:

- use *My Access Checker*
- phone us on 1800 800 110 or
- visit one of our offices in a launch area.

Some people’s existing supports will move across to us automatically. Your provider will tell you if this applies to you. If you are not sure about this, contact us.

**My Access Checker**

*My Access Checker* is a tool to help you understand whether you may be able to access individualised assistance from DisabilityCare Australia. If possible, you should complete *My Access Checker* before contacting us. We can help you to use it if needed.

- If *My Access Checker* shows you may be able to access individualised assistance, contact us to discuss your circumstances and to complete an access request form. We will then work with you to develop your individual plan.

- If *My Access Checker* shows you may not be able to access individualised assistance, you can still contact us—even if we can’t provide you with an individual support plan, we can still provide information.

You can use *My Access Checker* on our website at disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au or you can ask us for a paper version.
What is different about our approach?

We work with people to identify their goals, we provide information and referrals, and we can arrange for individualised supports to enable people to achieve a better quality of life and increased social and economic participation.

Our approach:

- **Empowers and enables**—People with disability are at the centre of decision-making about their lives and connected to supports that best suit their individual circumstances.

- **Increases choice and control**—People have more flexibility to choose support options. They have more control over how, when and where they receive support. This includes choosing how much they want to control the management of any funding, who supports them and how.

- **Suits individual circumstances**—People receive the reasonable and necessary supports they need to pursue their goals, be more independent, and participate in the community.

- **Takes a lifetime view**—Planning looks beyond immediate need to what is required across someone’s lifetime. This includes goals and aspirations, living arrangements, informal supports and carer’s circumstances. This also includes making early investments where this will reduce support needs and costs over someone’s lifetime. Support arrangements can be changed as goals, preferences and needs change over time.

- **Spreads the cost**—By spreading the cost among the wider community, we can make sure the scheme is sustainable into the future.
How do we work with people receiving support?

Our planners
Our planners come from a broad range of backgrounds, and have the expertise, training and skills to support DisabilityCare Australia participants. They help people work out their goals and plan what support they need to pursue them.

Our local area coordinators
Our coordinators know their communities. They support community and mainstream services to welcome, and increase participation options for, people with disability. They support communities to increase meaningful participation of people with disability. Coordinators can help people to develop goals and how they might be achieved—this might involve building new networks and information about how to access community supports and services. They also keep in touch with participants to see how their plans and supports are going.

Existing arrangements
After having a planning conversation with us, DisabilityCare Australia participants can choose to keep their existing supports if they are happy with the supports provided. Or we can work with them to adjust their supports to better meet their needs.
How do we work with providers?

Register with us
People using the scheme choose their supports and how they are provided based on their individual plan. They also choose whether to manage their plan themselves or through a nominee, registered plan management provider, or through us at DisabilityCare Australia. Where we manage the plan funding, providers must register with us to claim payments for the supports they provide. Providers and plan management providers need to register through our website. Go to disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au and click on the ‘Providers’ tab.

Gradual transition
Agreements with state and territory governments spell out which programs they fund and how and when these programs will change over to DisabilityCare Australia. During the launch stage, some existing block grant or case-based funding arrangements stay the same, while some funding moves to individual support plans. Programs may either convert to cash contributions or gradually change to fee-for-service arrangements purchased through an individual’s plan.

Descriptions of the timing for people to move into DisabilityCare Australia in each launch site are available at disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/fact-sheets-and-publications

What providers can tell existing clients
Providers’ existing clients don’t need to do anything right now. Their current support arrangements will continue until they move across to DisabilityCare Australia, in accordance with the agreed phasing rules that govern the timing for people to move into DisabilityCare Australia in each launch site.
We are supporting the sector

We are providing information and tools to help providers offer supports to people, adjust how they work with people, and be part of this new way of doing things.

We are also funding projects that improve the capacity of the sector, develop new and different support opportunities, and share information about better practices and lessons learnt.

‘I’m passionate about advocating for people living with a disability.’

Louise
How do we work with families and carers?

We recognise the valued role of families and carers who support people with disability. We will take informal supports into account when we design the plan with a participant.

We work with families and carers to help make sure the informal support they give can be sustained. We also recognise that some people with disability may want the support of family members, carers and others to make informed decisions.

Who provides informal support?

Informal care is often provided by someone who, without pay, supports a family member, friend or neighbour who needs assistance with daily activities.

What support do we provide carers and families?

- **We consider carers in individual plans**—We consider the carer’s role and circumstances when developing plans with participants. For example, the type and intensity of support provided, other care responsibilities and work or study commitments. We also consider the impact on other family members.

- **We can involve carers in planning**—We recognise the value of including the carer’s views, knowledge and experience in support planning. How involved the carer is in the planning process depends on things like the age, wishes and needs of the person with disability, and whether the carer has any legal decision-making authority.

‘I want my sister to access the community in ways that everybody does.’

Alison
• **We help ensure sustainable care arrangements**—We talk to carers about whether they need assistance to continue the same level of care, what may affect their capacity to continue providing care into the future, whether there are other carers who may also provide support, and the carer’s own life plans and aspirations. For example, as part of an individual plan we may provide funding to help carers, such as for training in support techniques or family capacity building. We know the support given may need to be reviewed as circumstances and aspirations change, for both the carer and the person they care for.

• **We provide information and referral**—Our comprehensive information and referral services help families and carers to access disability, community and other supports such as courses to build resilience and networks, counselling, peer support programs and education.
What about people outside launch areas?

For people living outside the first launch areas, existing national and state-based services and supports will continue until DisabilityCare Australia is introduced in their area or extended to their age group.

The work in launch areas will help us make sure we get implementation right and have a sustainable system that provides greater equity and ongoing access for people if they move to another part of Australia.

What about people who are 65 or older?

The aged care system supports people who are 65 or older. People who start with DisabilityCare Australia when they are under 65 can choose to stay in the scheme or move to the aged care system once they turn 65 (or 50 for Indigenous Australians).

What about people who don’t want to change?

People may choose to keep their existing supports if they are happy with their arrangements and if they are appropriate to their needs. We will work with people to understand their needs.
What do we value?

Our guiding principles
We believe people with disability have the same right as others to develop, pursue their goals, participate in society, have respect and dignity, exercise choice and control, be equal partners in decisions that affect their lives, and be certain they will receive the support they need over their life.

Our service commitment
We will provide professional, high quality, accessible, fair and timely service. You can expect respect, choice, control, flexibility, understanding, clear and accurate information and responsive service.

Our values
Our core values are behind everything we do. They are responsiveness, respect, transparency, accountability, innovation and learning.

Your privacy
We protect the privacy of people we work with. We follow national guidelines for collecting, using and disclosing personal information.
How can people provide feedback?

We welcome your feedback
Please tell us if we have provided a good service or helped you. You can give feedback direct to the person you are dealing with or email us at feedback@disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au or call 1800 800 110.

We want to know if you have a concern
We believe people have the right to raise a concern or make a complaint. This helps us see what is not working and how our service can be improved.

We will do our best to resolve your concerns as soon as possible.

If you are unhappy with our service please raise the issue straight away with the person you are dealing with.

If this is not appropriate or does not help, you can ask to speak with that person’s supervisor or the state/territory manager.

You can make a complaint in person, by phone, email or letter to the office you are dealing with. Contact details are on page 19.
**Contact us**

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<th><strong>Visit our website</strong></th>
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<td>disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au</td>
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<th><strong>Call us on 1800 800 110</strong></th>
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<td>Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 8.00pm Eastern Standard Time</td>
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<td><strong>TTY users</strong> phone 1800 555 677 and ask for 1800 800 110</td>
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<td><strong>Speak and Listen users</strong> phone 1800 555 727 and ask for 1800 800 110</td>
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<td><strong>Internet relay users</strong>, connect to the National Relay Service at relayservice.com.au and ask for 1800 800 110</td>
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