

26 May 2019

NDIS Annual Pricing Review

cohealth
90 Maribyrnong Street,
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To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of cohealth, to make a submission to the NDIS annual pricing review. cohealth is one of Victoria's largest community health services, operating across 10 local government areas in Victoria. Our mission is to improve health and wellbeing for all, and to tackle inequality and inequity in partnership with people and their communities. cohealth provides a range of services to people living with disabilities and we support the NDIS as a critical opportunity for improving people's lives

cohealth has been providing support coordination services to people living in Melbourne for two years and currently supports participants across a number of NDIS areas, including providing Support Coordination to 110 participants.

Our submission to the pricing review is focused on the current issues presented by the absence of funding to cover travel for participants to receive home visits for support coordination.

It is critical the travel component of the work is funded in line with allied health services (or Therapeutic Supports) i.e. capped at 20 minutes' drive, one way to an appointment.

We believe that providing the provision for claiming transport to appointments, when our participants request that we visit them in person, will allow them real choice and control over how their services are delivered.

Without a funded travel component, participants risk their time with Support Coordination being drastically reduced because they have a disability which results in them being socially isolated. This is a perverse and unintended outcome for people living with a psychosocial disability which we contend must be addressed as part of this review.

The NDIA's current position of not approving funding for travel to provide Support Coordination by visiting clients has the following impacts:

- As most of our participants choose to receive their services in their home or local community, NDIS Support Coordinators are required to travel to visit them to complete NDIS required documentation such as service agreements, yet this travel time is not able to be reimbursed.



- Many of our participants prefer to receive services face to face rather than over the phone. If providers are not able to be reimbursed for the travel time, then this limits the participant's choice and control
- Capacity building can often be more effectively done face to face with participants, particularly if they are not computer literate and have to be shown how to do things such as accessing the NDIS portal.
- Rapport and trust building are supported by face to face meetings this has particularly been the case when supporting participants with psychosocial disability (a high proportion of the participants we support).
- Accessibility: many of our participants have accessibility needs which mean face to face appointments are necessary. e.g. Clients with communication difficulties and hearing impairments.
- Some of our participants do not own or have difficulty keeping a phone and laptop, making phone calls impractical.
- If providers are not able to support the above participants in a cost-effective way due to the limitations of transport funding it will lead to their choice of service providers becoming limited or non-existent.

Thank you for consideration of this important issue.

Caz Healy

Lead Executive, Services

cohealth

