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National Disability  
Insurance Agency

Q2  
2023-24

A young child with curly hair is shown from the chest up, looking down at toys on a table. The child is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. The background is a blurred green outdoor setting. A large purple semi-transparent shape is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing the report title and date.

# NDIS Quarterly report to disability ministers

31 December 2023

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The NDIA acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation and the Traditional Custodians of the lands across which our Agency conducts our business. We pay our respects to the custodians of the land on which we work as well as their ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging.

The NDIA is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters, seas and their rich contribution to society.

Artwork 'Belonging' by Charmaine Mumbulla.

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# This report

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This report is an overview of the performance and operations of the NDIA for the 3 months from 1 October 2023 to 31 December 2023.

The NDIA is committed to ensuring all data around NDIA performance and participant outcomes remains accessible and easy to understand by different audiences.

Analysis and key insights are presented in this report, including key figures and cross jurisdictional comparisons in the appendices.

As part of streamlining the report, some of the Appendices in earlier reports are now available as supplements on the [NDIS website](#)<sup>1</sup>.

Supplementary list:

- National, State and Territory statistics
- Participants by service district and support type, and committed supports and payments by service district
- Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA).

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1 <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/quarterly-report-supplements>

# Introduction

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## Key highlights for Quarter 2 2023–24

Continued improvements in outcomes for choice and control highlight the difference the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is making for participants, families and carers.

- More than 3 quarters of all participants aged over 15 years reported greater choice and control in their lives, exceeding the 2023–24 target.
- There has been a 10 percentage point increase, from **67%** to **77%**. This compares to a 2023–24 target of **75%**.
- **41%** of participants aged 15 years and older reported increased participation in community and social activities – a relative increase of **19%**.
- Participation in work has more than doubled from **10%** to **22%** for participants aged 15 to 24 years.
- Half of all parents and carers are now reporting paid employment, reaching the 2023–24 target of **50%**. This is a relative increase of **10%**.

The transformation of the National Contact Centre (NCC) also continued in the December 2023 quarter, including ongoing recruitment for the insourced contact centre. The NCC exceeded disability targets with **42%** of the NCC Operations team identifying as having a disability.

## Quarter 2 updates

This quarter, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has been focused on:

1. Scheme financial experience
2. NDIS Review
3. Disability Royal Commission
4. National rollout of the NDIA's new computer system

## Scheme financial experience

While the growth rate of the NDIS is reducing, payments for participant supports and the number of participants entering the Scheme are higher than expectations in the June 2023 projections.

Scheme financial experience is monitored against expectations outlined in the 2022–23 Annual Financial Sustainability Report (AFSR). The AFSR was published by the NDIA in December 2023.

While the growth has started to stabilise, payments for participant supports and participant numbers have continued to increase and are both above the June 2023 projections in the 2022–23 AFSR.

Total Scheme expenses for the 6 months to 31 December 2023 were \$20.4 billion (on an accrual basis) or 1.9% higher than the estimate from the June 2023 projections. The main drivers of this difference are:

- **Number of participants** – the total number of Scheme participants at 31 December 2023 was 646,449, which is 3,241 (0.5%) higher than the June 2023 projections. This is primarily driven by the total number of participants with developmental delay at 31 December 2023 which was 96,005 or 9,519 (11%) higher than the June 2023 projections.
- **Average payment per participant** – the average payment per participant for the 6 months to December 2023 was \$63,000 (on a cash basis) or 2.1% higher than expectations after taking into account the actual mix of participants who have entered the Scheme since 30 June 2023. However, the average payment experience varies by disability type and other participant characteristics. The average payment per participant with developmental delay for the 6 months to December 2023 was \$14,000, which was \$2,300 (19%) higher than expectations based on the June 2023 projections.

The NDIA continues to examine available data to understand the key risks to financial sustainability of the Scheme. They include:

- High numbers of children with developmental delay entering the Scheme, as well as increasing numbers of adult new entrants with autism
- Average plan budgets, which drive average payments per participant. Overall, plan budgets have increased by 14.4% (annualised) between June 2023 and December 2023 for participants already in the Scheme. Approximately 2.5% can be attributed to the combined effects of indexation, following the 2022–23 Annual Pricing Review (APR). The remaining 11.9% growth is over and above indexation and pricing impacts.

The measures announced in the 2023–24 Budget are aimed to support participant outcomes and the effective and sustainable operation of the Scheme. Through co-design, the NDIA is implementing a program of initiatives designed to improve early intervention outcomes for children in the Scheme, improve participant planning processes and consistency in home and living eligibility decisions for participants with complex and high support needs, which are expected to assist in addressing key risks to financial sustainability outlined above. Changes in settings arising from NDIS Review recommendations are also anticipated to lead to further moderation in Scheme growth, to achieve the target set by National Cabinet.



## NDIS Review

On 7 December 2023, the Minister for the NDIS released the independent NDIS Review. The report maps out 26 recommendations with 139 actions to help restore trust, ensure the Scheme's sustainability, and deliver a better NDIS experience for participants.

The NDIA actively engaged with the NDIS Review which aims to put people with disability back at the centre of the NDIS. It is among the most comprehensive and accessible Commonwealth reviews in history.

At National Cabinet on 6 December 2023, the Australian Government and states and territories committed to reforming the NDIS to make disability supports fairer for all Australians – this historic meeting of National Cabinet committed to securing the future of the NDIS for generations of Australians.

National Cabinet agreed to implement legislative changes to the NDIS to improve the experience of participants and restore the original intent of the Scheme to support people with permanent and significant disability, within a broader ecosystem of supports.

National Cabinet also agreed to together design additional foundational supports to be jointly commissioned by the Commonwealth and the states.

The NDIS Review looked at:

- the Scheme's design, operations, and sustainability
- ways to build a more responsive, supportive, and sustainable market and workforce.

The NDIS Review consulted widely and asked people with disability, their families and the disability community what needed to improve. Discussions with the disability community will continue over the coming months as we work together to make the positive changes needed for people with disability.

All 26 recommendations are important – but they are considered a package of reforms. Some recommendations can be actioned quickly, while others will take more time. We will take the time needed to get changes right and we will transition to new arrangements in a careful and considered way over time.

The Review's recommendation included legislative reforms to return the Scheme to its original intent and improve the experience of participants. This included legislation to improve eligibility and access, as well as an early intervention pathway for children. Changes will be guided by good legislation and good plans for implementation – developed in partnership with people with disability and the disability community.

Together with government, the NDIA will take the time to carefully consider all recommendations.

There will be no immediate changes for:

- participants, their families and carers
- staff, NDIS Partners in the Community and providers
- the broader disability community.

This work will be expanded to include detailed design and implementation of the recommendations of the NDIS Review including the development of legislation, NDIA process reform – all the way through to implementation.

## Disability Royal Commission

The Disability Royal Commission (DRC) was established in April 2019 in response to community concern about widespread reports of violence against, and the neglect, abuse and exploitation of people with disability.

The final report was tabled on 29 September 2023. The report consists of 12 volumes outlining 222 recommendations. It contains recommendations on how to improve laws, policies, structures and practices to create a more inclusive and just society.

Key themes and outcomes in the final DRC report included:

- Legislative and structural change to the disability landscape – with the establishment of an Australian Disability Rights Act, a Disability Commission and a Department for Disability, Equality and Inclusion.
- Regulatory improvements – to ensure disability service providers have robust and transparent policies and procedures to detect and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Ending segregation in mainstream settings – including workplaces, educational facilities, group homes and criminal justice systems.

A Government taskforce has been established to consider the recommendations, with the NDIA represented within this group.

It is important to acknowledge the courage of those who shared their experiences of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, while commending them for their dedicated and passionate work over the course of the inquiry.

## National rollout of the NDIA's new computer system

The national rollout of the NDIA's new computer system and processes started as planned on 30 October 2023.

It is expected to take 18 months for all participant plans to move to the new system.

The NDIA is taking time with the national rollout to ensure everyone connected to the NDIS – participants, providers, NDIA staff and NDIS Partners in the Community – have time to prepare for the new ways of working and know what to expect from the next step in their NDIS journey.

The NDIA is working closely with participants and providers, ensuring they have the right support and information needed to transition to the new computer system and ways of working.

Information, tools and resources to support participants and providers are available on the new dedicated website, [improvements.ndis.gov.au](https://improvements.ndis.gov.au)

The NDIA has observed reduced volumes of access and first planning decisions during the December quarter, which also reflects fewer people being included in outcome surveys. This is attributed to adaptation to the new system and integration of new processes, alongside balancing work effort required across 2 systems and capability building for NDIA staff and NDIS Partners in the Community.

The NDIA is supporting its workforce with the training, tools and resources they need to do their work in the new system and is confident capability will continue to build.

The new computer system will improve the way NDIA staff work and support the improved processes to deliver a consistent NDIS experience for participants across Australia, supporting them to achieve their goals.

Further information about the national rollout can be found in section 6 of the report.



## The right supports ensure Harvey gets the best start in life

As a new mum, Chelsea is so grateful for all the supports she has received from Cerebral Palsy Alliance (CPA), disability provider EACH, and the NDIS. It has all helped to give her son Harvey, now 2, the best start in life.

Within 24 hours of Harvey's birth, he was in Liverpool Hospital's newborn intensive care unit (NICU).

'Harvey had haemorrhaged. He needed a blood transfusion, then he started having atonic seizures. As first-time parents it was so scary,' said Chelsea.

A brain scan confirmed stroke and some brain damage. Three months later Harvey was diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

Experiencing a whirlwind of emotions, Chelsea said she and her husband had limited knowledge of disability – what it meant for Harvey and what it meant for them as a new family.

'It was a bit overwhelming at first but the physio in the NICU was fantastic. I think she knew Harvey had CP from the start, and she referred us to CPA.'

They attended CPAs' Prairiewood Early Diagnosis Clinic where Harvey had access to physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology initially.

'CPA told us all about the NDIS – how the funding could help put early childhood supports in place for Harvey. Staff also helped me collate all the reports and evidence I needed so Harvey could become an NDIS participant,' she said, 'then we were connected to EACH.'

'Considering what Harvey's been through, he is doing incredibly well now,' Chelsea said. 'He's reached all his milestones. He's a little bit delayed but he will reach them all.'

'He's climbing, running, and jumping – all of his fine motor skills have developed. He's talking and he just loves learning to swim with me in the water.'

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**'If we didn't have all this support who knows where we would have been.'**

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# Section 1: Participants and their plans

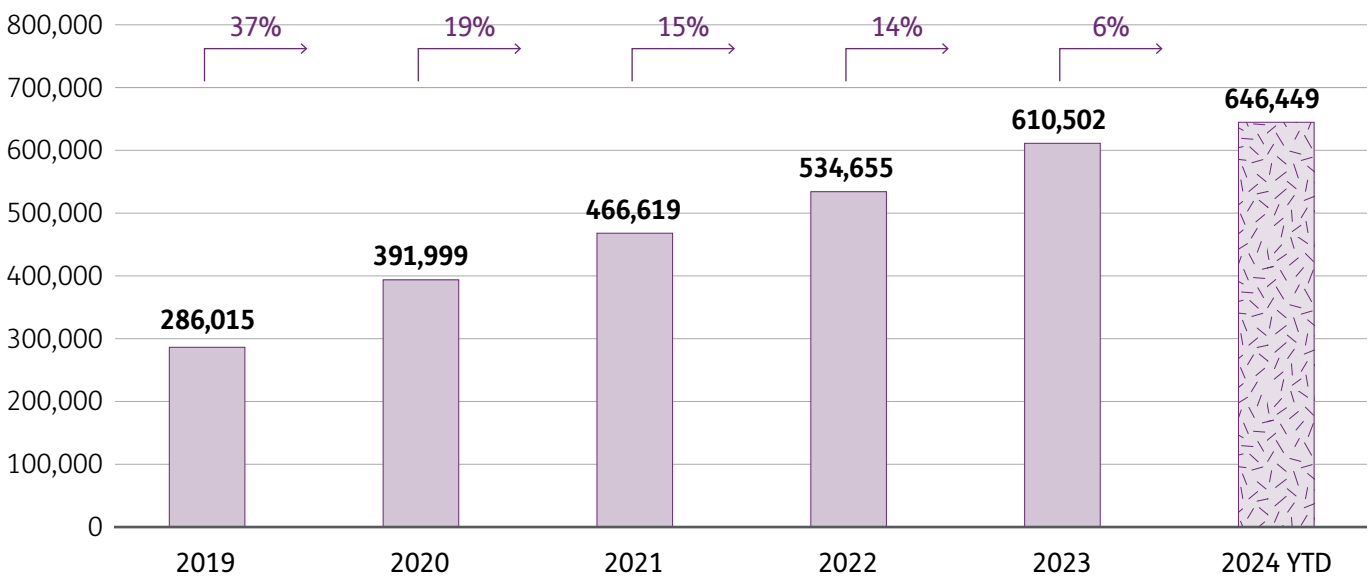


More than 640,000 participants are receiving support from the NDIS, and more than 17,000 participants entered the Scheme during the quarter.

## 1.1 Number of participants in the Scheme

At December 2023, 646,449 participants had approved plans.<sup>2</sup> This represents a 2% net increase from last quarter (a net increase of 14,920 participants since September). The quarterly increase is lower than recent quarters due to processing volumes being temporarily impacted by migrating to the new computer system.

Figure 1: Active participants with approved plans and percentage increase over time for years ending 30 June<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> 46,944 participants with approved plans have left the NDIS in the period between 1 July 2013 and 31 December 2023.

<sup>3</sup> This is the net increase in the number of active participants in the NDIS each period noting some participants have left the NDIS.

## 1.2 Participation rates

The number of NDIS participants as a proportion of the Australian population peaks between the ages of 5 and 7, with approximately 12% of 5 to 7 year-old males and 6% of 5 to 7 year-old females being NDIS participants.

Participation rate refers to the proportion of the Australian population who are NDIS participants. The rate varies by age and gender, reflecting the prevalence of different disability types.

Overall, the rate of participation in the NDIS rises steeply from birth, peaking at roughly 9% between the ages of 5 and 7. The rate then declines steadily to around 1% by age 35, before rising gradually to 2% by age 64. The shape of these participation rates reflects the age and disability profile of participants in the Scheme, with over half of all NDIS participants younger than 18.

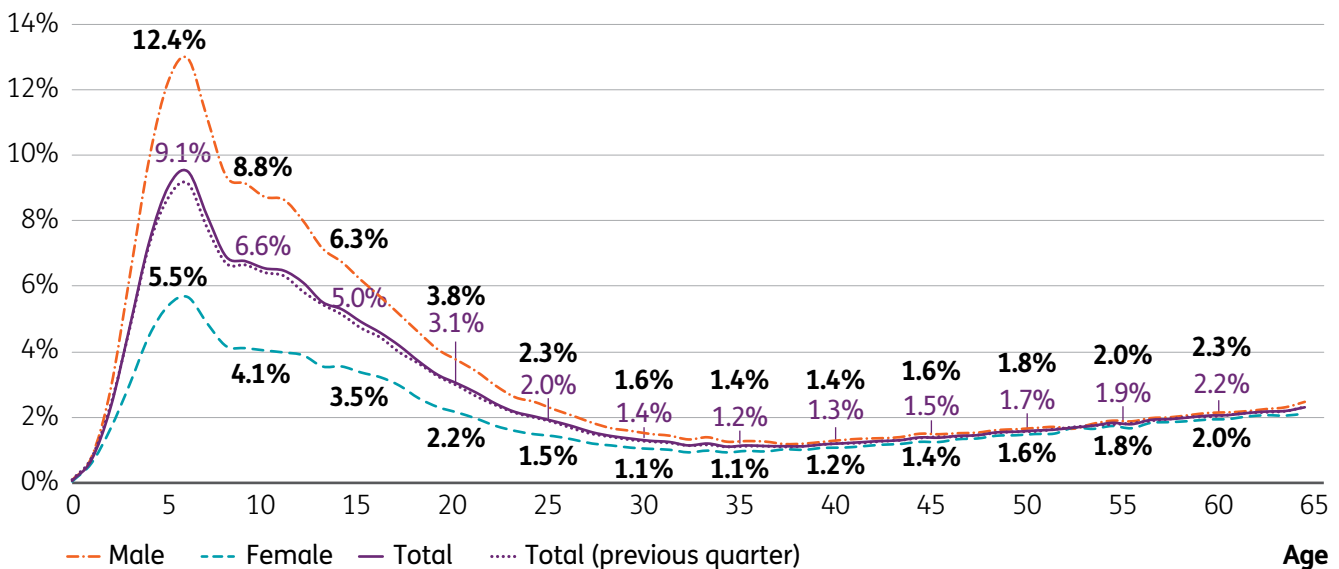
Participation rates for males and females differ considerably at younger ages. At the peak, between the ages of 5 and 7, the participation rate for males (12.4%) is more than double that of females (5.5%).

Much of the difference in participation rates by gender can be explained by disability type. For NDIS participants younger than 18, the most prevalent disability types are autism and developmental delay. Both disability types have higher prevalence in males than females. Psychosocial disability and intellectual disability are a high proportion of the remaining disability types.

Participation rates at ages up to 21 are generally slightly higher than last quarter’s results, increasing by up to 0.4 percentage points in the younger age bands.

The participation rates by age and gender in each service district are shown in the Supplements.

Figure 2: Participation rates<sup>4,5</sup>



4 There were 8,703 participants aged 0 to 64 years with a gender of "Other" at 31 December 2023. The participation rates for this group are included within the total rates.  
 5 The 2021 Census population has been adopted since the March 2023 report, increasing the calculated participation rates, more so between the ages of 0 and 6, where participation rates are higher by 0.3 percentage points.

### 1.3 Participant characteristics

The NDIA continues to monitor the number of participants entering the NDIS who identify as First Nations Australians, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), and participants who are from remote and very remote areas.

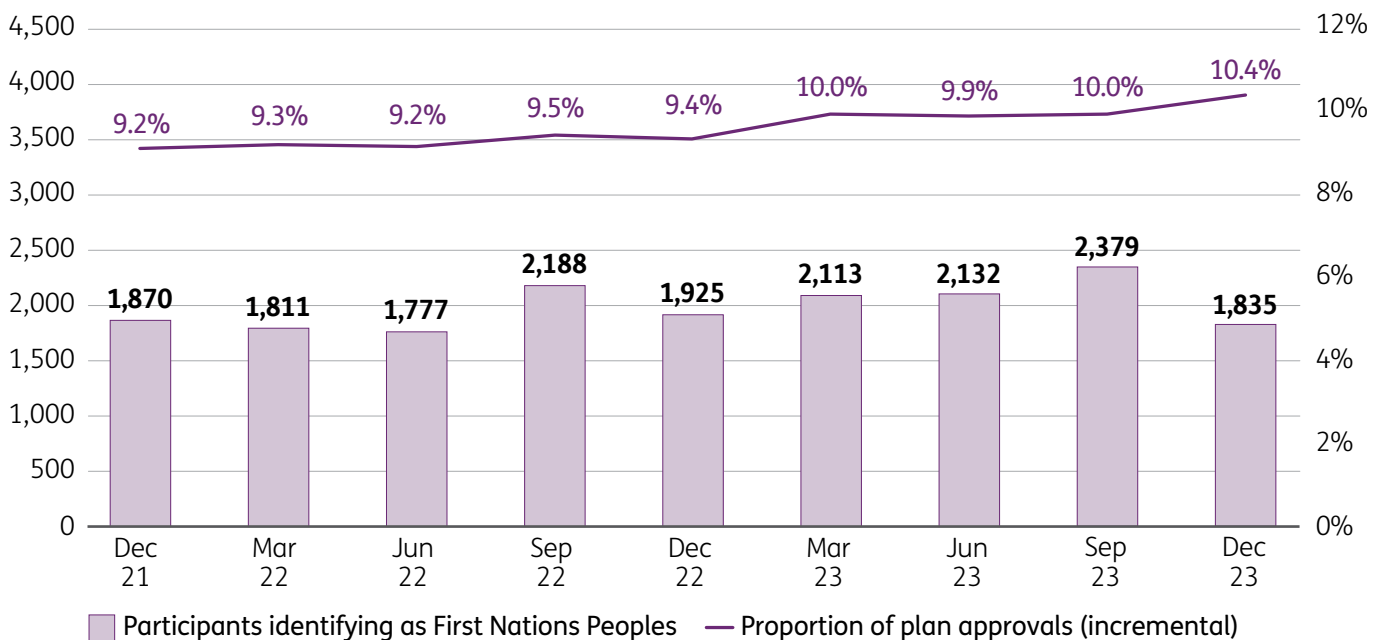
Of the 17,605 participants entering and receiving a plan in the quarter:

- **10.4%** were First Nations Peoples<sup>6</sup>
- **7.7%** were CALD<sup>7</sup>
- **1.7%** were from remote and very remote areas.<sup>8</sup>

The NDIA is co-designing a new CALD strategy for 2024–2028 and has committed to co-design a new First Nations strategy. Further information can be found in section 6 of this report.<sup>9</sup>

Trends in First Nations participants are shown in the following figures. The proportion of participants entering the Scheme this quarter who identify as First Nations people has increased to 10.4%, and the total proportion of First Nations participants in the Scheme has remained at 7.8% from last quarter. There are initiatives being deployed to support First Nations and remote participants to access, navigate and utilise the Scheme. These initiatives include the Remote Community Connectors (RCC) program and the Aboriginal Disability Liaison Officers program, which supports First Nations participants in urban areas. CALD and remote participation are similar to that observed in previous reports.

Figure 3: Number and proportion of First Nations participants entering quarterly over time incrementally (below) and cumulatively (over page)<sup>10,11</sup>



6 This compares to 8% of the Australian population identifying as First Nations Peoples who have a need for assistance. Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021 (“Need for Assistance” variable), Persons Place of Usual Residence, by Indigenous Status.

7 The percentage of CALD participants excludes participants who identify as First Nations Peoples. Further, the NDIA published extra analysis on CALD participants in the September 2021 quarterly report (<https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/quarterly-reports>). The analysis indicated that it is likely that CALD participants are joining the NDIS but have not been identified as CALD in the data collected, rather than a large number of CALD people with a disability not currently being in the NDIS. With the introduction of the new computer system, the opportunity to collect improved data on participants should allow better identification of CALD participants.

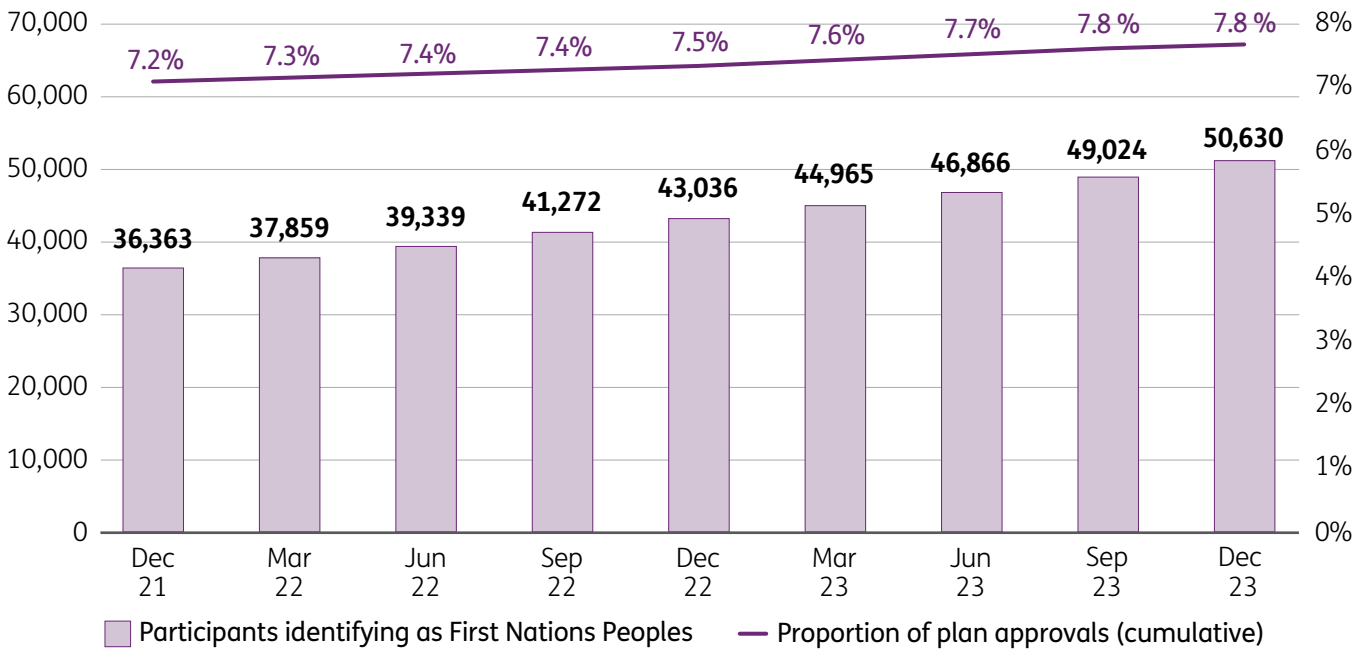
8 This compares to 2% of the Australian population living in remote or very remote areas. Source: Census of Population and Housing 2021, Persons Place of Usual Residence, by Remoteness Area.

9 Further information on these strategies can be found here: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/strategies/first-nations-strategy> and <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/strategies/cultural-and-linguistic-diversity-strategy>

10 The incremental chart shows the distribution of new participants that have entered in each quarter. The cumulative chart shows the distribution of active participants as at each quarter over time.

11 <https://data.ndis.gov.au/explore-data> has detail on numbers of CALD participants and remote and very remote participants.

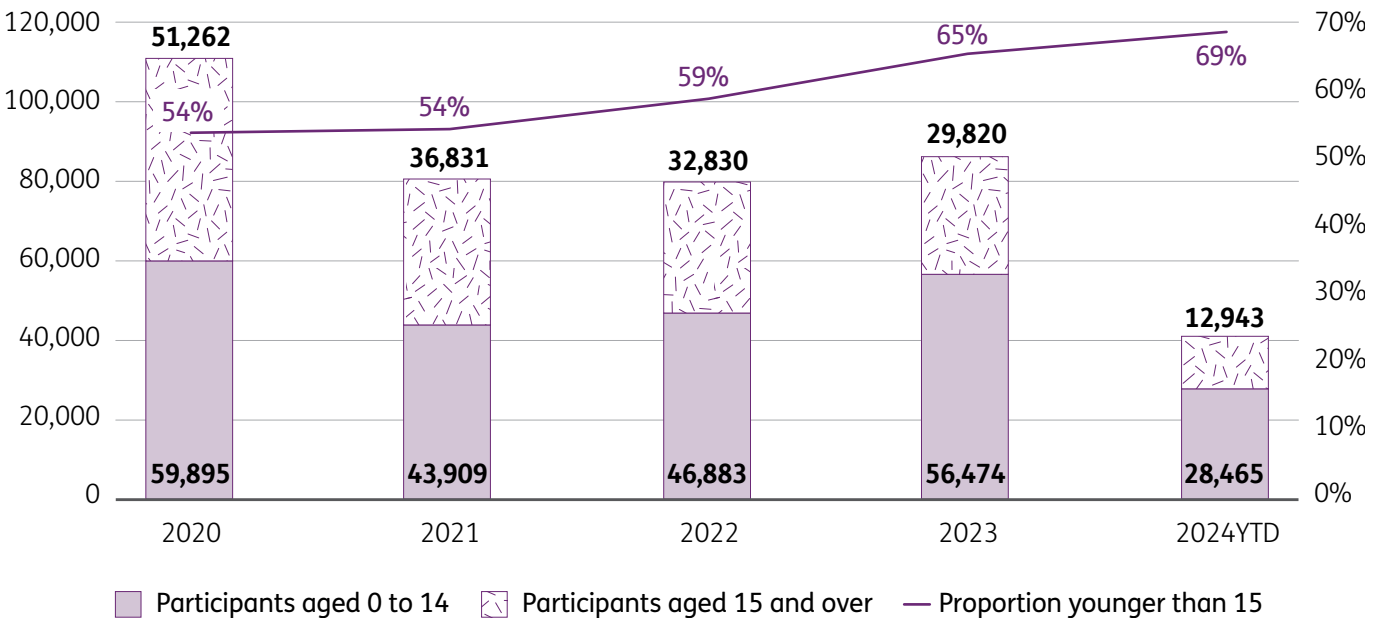
Section 1: Participants and their plans



**Children in the NDIS (younger than 15)**

The number of children entering the Scheme continues to grow at a faster rate than older participants. Of the 17,605 participants entering and receiving a plan in the quarter, **72%** were children younger than 15. This is a continuation of the increasing proportions of younger participants joining the Scheme.

Figure 4: Number and proportion of participants by age band entering by financial year ending 30 June





## Younger People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC)

### The YPIRAC targets

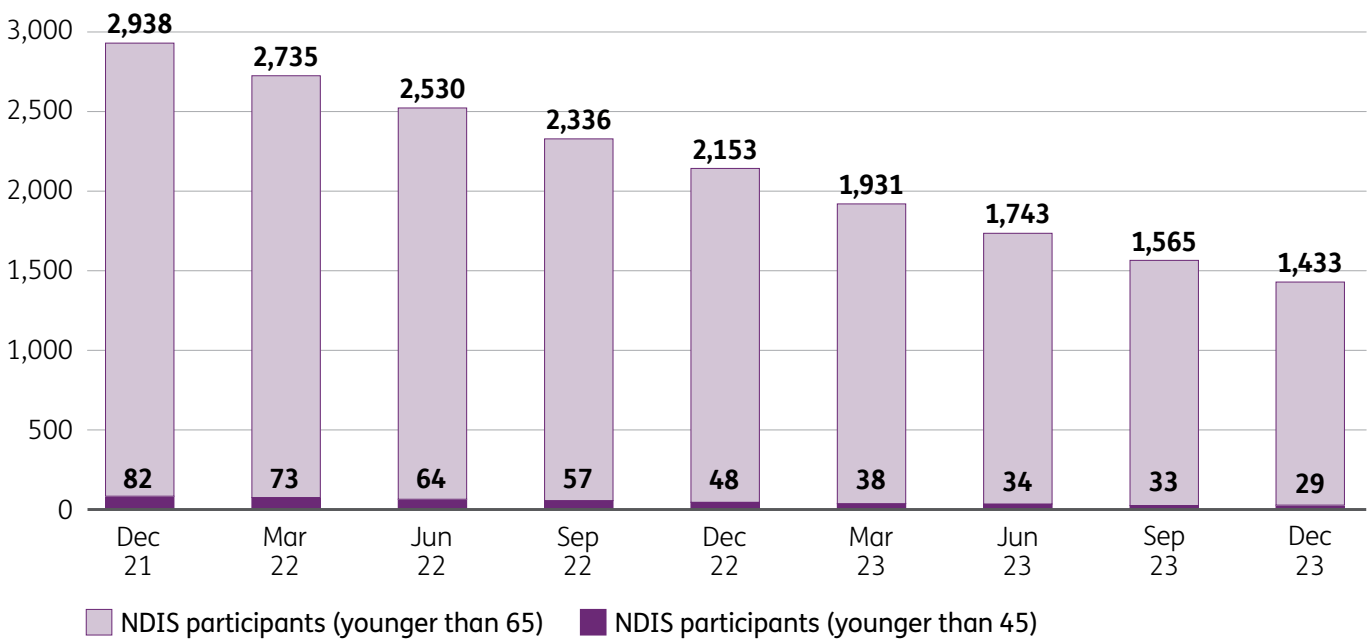
The Australian Government is committed to achieving the YPIRAC targets which seek to ensure that, apart from where there are exceptional circumstances, there are no people younger than 65 living in aged care by 2025. The NDIA is supporting this achievement with a team of dedicated YPIRAC Planners and Accommodation Officers.

### The NDIA's focus on YPIRAC

At 31 December 2023, there were 1,433 participants younger than 65 in residential aged care with an NDIS approved plan, including 29 who were younger than 45 (2%).

From 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, 166 participants have transitioned from residential aged care into age-appropriate settings. This includes 17 who have left to their own home (rented or owned), 59 who have exited to SDA, one who has left to medium term accommodation and 89 who have left to other shared living arrangements using Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding or to other group residential settings. Since 1 July 2016, 1,096 participants have left residential aged care and are now in a more appropriate accommodation setting.

Figure 5: Number of NDIS participants in residential aged care (younger than 65 and younger than 45)<sup>12</sup>



As at 31 December 2023, 475 younger people in residential aged care have a goal to leave residential aged care, including 13 younger than 45. The NDIA is committed to supporting the transition of young people living in residential aged care to appropriate accommodation, and stopping entries of young people into residential aged care, except in very limited exceptional circumstances.

<sup>12</sup> Represents the number of NDIS participants in residential aged care as per data available on respective quarter-ends.

## 1.4 Children in the NDIS (younger than 9)<sup>13</sup>

At 31 December 2023, there were 155,677 children younger than 9 with an NDIS plan, and a further 15,135 accessing early connections.

From 1 July 2023 the NDIA extended access to early childhood arrangements through its early childhood Partners in the Community to children younger than 9. These arrangements had previously been available to children younger than 7. This change was recommended through the early childhood early intervention reset initiative commenced in 2021. This change ensures children, and their families are supported by an early childhood partner during and after their transition to primary school.

In addition to the 155,677 children younger than 9 with an approved plan:

- **2,884** children had met the access criteria under Section 24 of the *NDIS Act* (Disability) or Section 25 of the *NDIS Act* (Early Intervention) and were waiting for an approved plan.
- **5,747** were awaiting an access decision from the NDIA (of which **2,462 (43%)** were accessing early connections from the early childhood approach).
- **12,961<sup>14</sup>** children were supported by the early childhood approach (of which **12,673 (98%)** were accessing early connections). Not all children need to apply for the NDIS because some will receive early connections, along with support from mainstream and community services.

Throughout the quarter, the NDIA continued to focus on improving access to supports for children and families in remote and very remote areas. This effort contributed to 160 children meeting access criteria to participate in the NDIS, of which 74 identified as First Nations families. Of the 155,677 children younger than 9 with an approved plan as at 31 December 2023, 2,207 were children in remote and very remote areas.

<sup>13</sup> The lower numbers for the December 2023 quarter are attributed to adaptation to the new computer system and integration of new processes.

<sup>14</sup> The number of children supported by the early childhood approach who are not receiving early connections in this figure does not include data from the new computer system.



## Sengo cuts through barriers to become a community champion

From isolation, to becoming a ‘disability champion’, connecting with the community through support from the NDIS has seen Sengo shine.

Sengo, who arrived in Australia as a refugee from Congo in 2019, has become a Community Connector, and actively educates others in his community about disability and the assistance available through the NDIS.

Also running the successful Mussa’s Mobile Barber, Sengo said he’d achieved his dream Down Under.

Initially, Sengo struggled with his daily living needs. Due to the physical limitations resulting from his disability, public transport was too difficult for Sengo, preventing him from accessing the community and fuelling his isolation.

However, 6 months after his arrival, Sengo accessed NDIS supports through Relationships Australia and secured transport assistance, enabling him to start discovering his local area and meeting people within the community. He receives assistance with daily living activities, therapeutic services, and access to assistive technologies.

With his friendly, outgoing nature, Sengo was making friends and learning about Australia. After around 12 months, he felt settled, a sense of belonging, and truly connected to his local community in Adelaide.

Sengo’s Feros Care Local Area Coordinators assist him in making informed decisions to ensure the support he receives is tailored to his needs and goals.

Becoming a Community Connector, where he actively educates others in his community about disability and the assistance available through the NDIS, Sengo said he feels empowered through the support he’s received.

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**‘My association with Feros Care has not only made me feel respected within my community as a person with a disability, but also empowered me to become the ‘Disability Champion’ within my community.’**

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As a leader, he regularly invites his community members to attend information sessions, where he answers questions and guides those who require assistance in this area. He actively participates in events, raising awareness and advocating for the disability community.

‘When I arrived in Australia, my main goal was to do something people can respect me for,’ he said. ‘And now I’ve achieved that.’

## Section 2: Participant and family/carer outcomes



The NDIS is having a positive impact on the lives of participants, and their families and carers.

### 2.1 Measuring outcomes

Reports on annual outcomes and specific outcome areas such as employment are publicly available.

#### Outcomes framework questionnaires

The results in this section are based on responses provided by participants and their families and carers to the outcomes framework questionnaires. These questionnaires collect information on how participants and their families and carers are progressing in different areas (domains) of their lives.

Responses are collected at Scheme entry (baseline) and at subsequent plan reassessments, allowing progress to be tracked over a participant's time in the Scheme.

#### Reporting on outcomes

Information collected from the current outcomes framework questionnaires is used to contribute to a range of publicly available reports and data cubes.<sup>15,16,17,18</sup>

15 Annual outcomes reports for participants, for family and carers, and dashboards by geographical area: <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/outcomes-and-goals/participant-families-and-carer-outcomes-reports>.

16 Analysis focusing on employment outcomes: <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/outcomes-and-goals/employment-outcomes-participants-their-families-and-carers>.

17 Analysis focusing on health and wellbeing: <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/outcomes-and-goals/health-and-wellbeing-ndis-participants-and-their-families-and-carers>.

18 Quarterly data cubes containing baseline and longitudinal results for key indicators: <https://data.ndis.gov.au/data-downloads>.

## 2.2 Participation in work and community and social activities<sup>19, 20</sup>

Despite COVID-19, participation rates in community and social activities have increased, while the overall rate of participation in work is stable.

### Participation in community and social activities

Participants who have been in the Scheme for at least 2 years have seen their community and social participation increase, since they first entered. Specifically, comparing responses at the most recent plan reassessment (between 2 and 7 years after entry) with responses at Scheme entry:<sup>21</sup>

- **six** percentage point increase from **33%** to **39%** for participants aged 15 to 24 years
- **nine** percentage point increase from **35%** to **44%** for participants aged 25 to 34 years
- **seven** percentage point increase from **35%** to **43%** for participants aged 35 to 44 years
- **seven** percentage point increase from **35%** to **41%** for participants aged 45 to 54 years
- **five** percentage point increase from **35%** to **40%** for participants aged 55 to 64 years
- **five** percentage point increase from **36%** to **41%** for participants aged 65 years and older
- **seven percentage point increase from 35% to 41% for participants aged 15 years and older.**

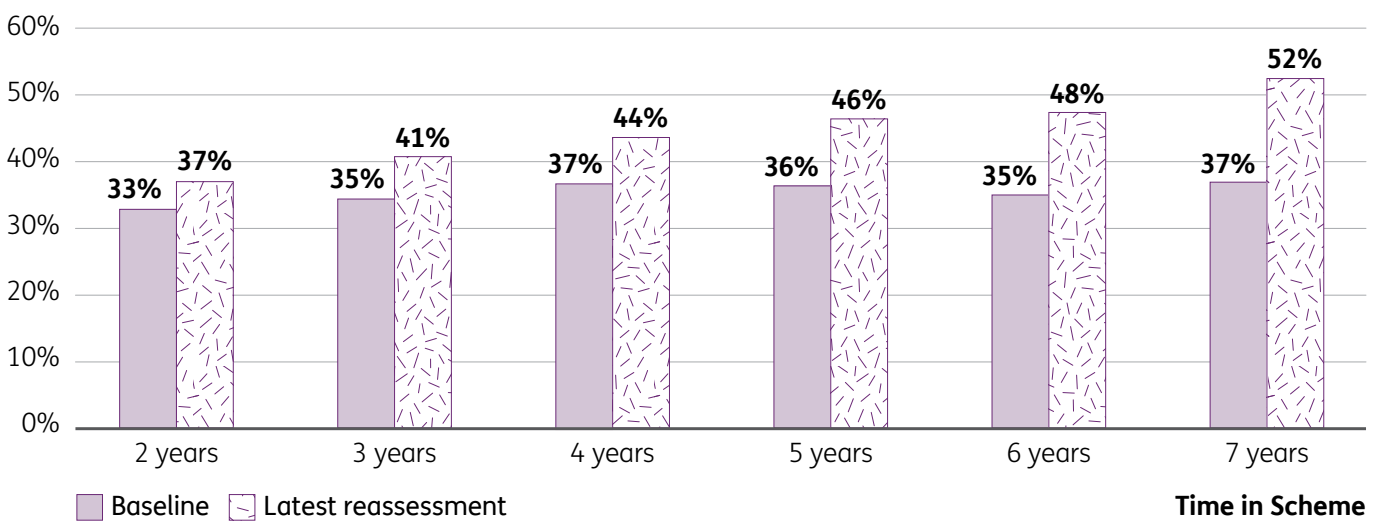
The overall result of 41% compares to a 2023–24 target of 46%.

In general, the increase in participation in community and social activities has improved the longer participants have been in the Scheme.

Combining all age groups<sup>22</sup>, the increase for participants who have been in the Scheme for 2 years was 4 percentage points (from 33% to 37%). For participants who have been in the Scheme for 5, 6 or 7 years, participation in social and community activities increased by at least 10 percentage points for each cohort, by 10, 13 and 15 percentage points, respectively.

Figure 6: Percentage change in the participation rate in social activities

Participants aged 15 years and over



19 This section compares baseline indicator results when participants entered the Scheme, with results measured at the most recent participant plan reassessment for each respondent. Trial participants are excluded.

20 The participant age reported in this section is as per their latest plan reassessment.

21 Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage; differences are calculated from unrounded metrics.

22 Ibid.

### Participation in work

The percentage in a paid job for those in the Scheme for at least 2 years continues to be relatively stable overall. However, the percentage and the change over time in the Scheme differs by age group. For instance, the largest percentage increase was for participants in the 15 to 24 age group, consistent with participants entering the workforce for the first time. The percentage in a paid job remains stable or declines for all other age bands. Specifically, comparing responses at the most recent plan reassessment (between 2 to 7 years after entry) with responses at Scheme entry:<sup>23</sup>

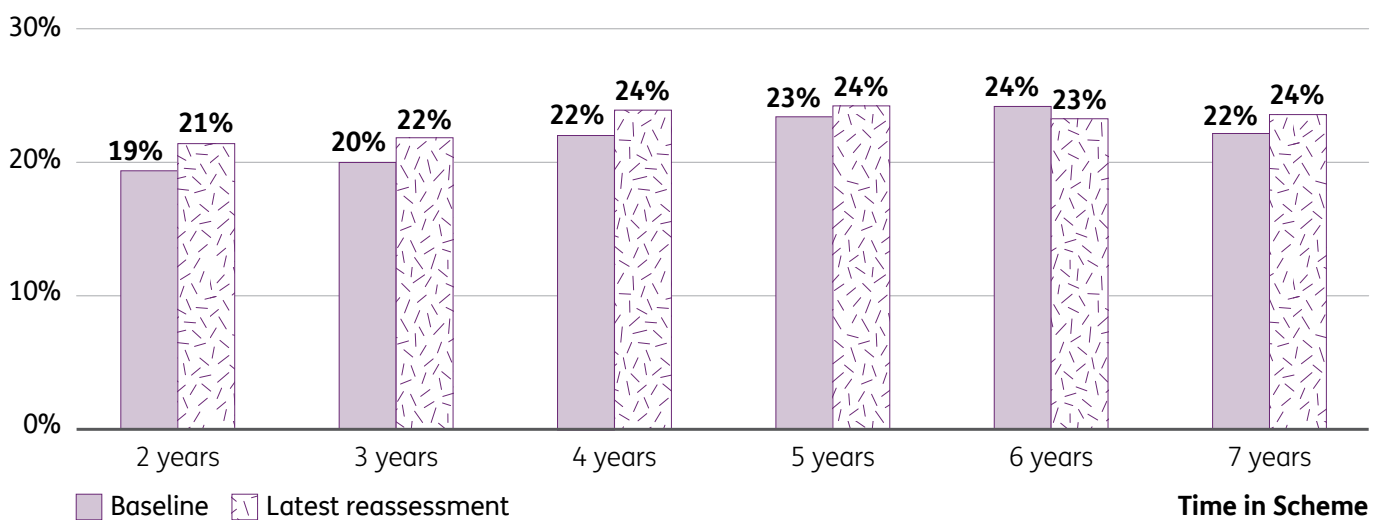
- **eleven** percentage point increase from **10%** to **22%** for participants aged 15 to 24 years<sup>24</sup>
- **two** percentage point increase from **27%** to **29%** for participants aged 25 to 34 years
- **one** percentage point decrease from **28%** to **27%** for participants aged 35 to 44 years
- **two** percentage point decrease from **25%** to **23%** for participants aged 45 to 54 years
- **four** percentage point decrease from **19%** to **15%** for participants aged 55 to 64 years<sup>25</sup>
- **four** percentage point decrease from **13%** to **8%** for participants aged 65 years and older<sup>26</sup>
- **two percentage point increase from 21% to 22% for participants aged 15–64 years.**

The overall result of 22% compares to a 2023–24 target of 26%.

For participants who are of working age (15 to 64), the percentage in work has increased slightly from 19% to 21% – for those who have been in the Scheme for 2 years. For participants who have been in the Scheme for 7 years, the percentage of participants in work has increased from 22% to 24%.

Figure 7: Change in the percentage of participants in work

#### Participants aged 15 to 64 years



<sup>23</sup> Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage; differences are calculated from unrounded metrics.

<sup>24</sup> Some of the increase is due to participants leaving school and starting work. As the Scheme matures it will be possible to analyse the extent to which the percentage gap increases.

<sup>25</sup> Some of the decrease for older age groups is due to participants retiring from the workforce.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

### Family/carer employment rate

The global COVID-19 pandemic that took hold from early 2020 has also had an impact on family/carer employment (and other indicators).

The percentage of parents/carers in a paid job for participants who have been in the Scheme for at least 2 years has improved over time. Specifically, comparing responses at the most recent plan reassessment (between 2 and 7 years after entry) with responses at Scheme entry, there has been a:<sup>27</sup>

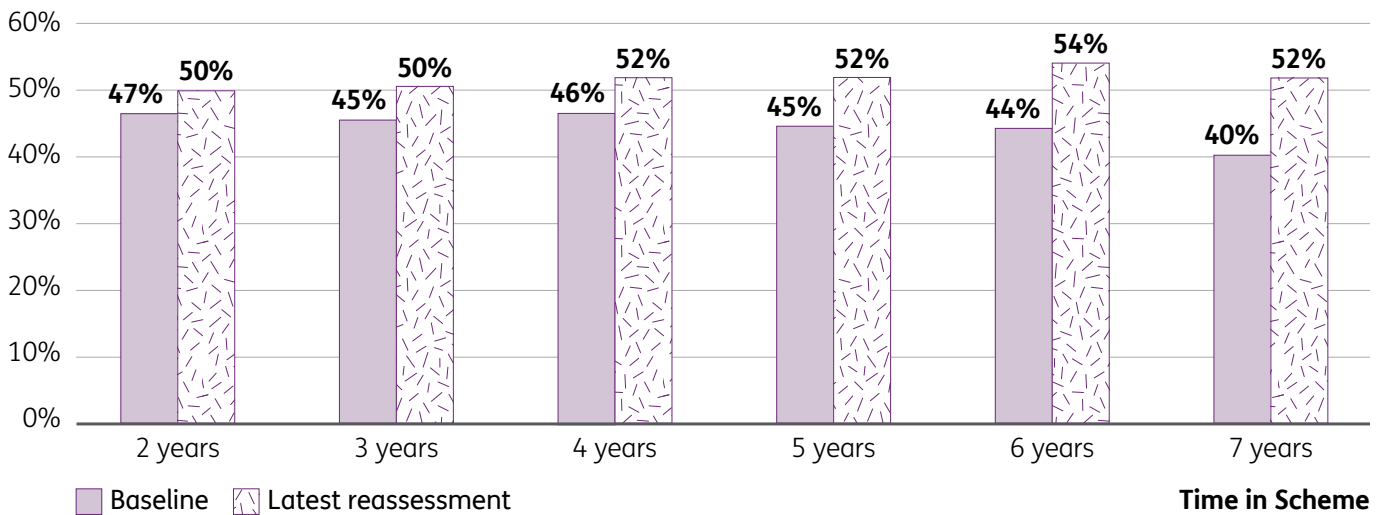
- **six** percentage point increase from **45%** to **52%** for parents/carers of participants aged 0 to 14 years
- **two** percentage point increase from **47%** to **49%** for parents/carers of participants aged 15 years and over.

Overall, for parents/carers of all participants, there has been a 5 percentage point increase, from 46% to 51%, slightly above the 2023–24 target of 50%.

Considering all families and carers of participants of all ages in the Scheme for at least 2 years, larger improvements in the percentage in work are seen where the participant has been in the Scheme for longer. For instance, 47% of those who have been in the Scheme for 2 years were in work at baseline, compared to 50% at second reassessment. Those in the Scheme for 6 years improved from 44% to 54% and those in the Scheme for 7 years improved from 40% to 52%.

Figure 8: Change in the percentage of families and carers of participants in work

#### Families and carers of participants of all ages



<sup>27</sup> Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage; differences are calculated from unrounded metrics.

## 2.3 Perceptions of whether the NDIS has helped

Participants have positive perceptions across most domains and different age groups. However, the percentage of positive responses varies by domain and age group.

At each plan reassessment, participants are asked whether the NDIS has helped with areas related to each domain. For these questions, longitudinal change is measured from first plan reassessment, since the Scheme has not had an opportunity to help at baseline. Results shown in this section compare responses provided at the first plan reassessment with those from later reassessments, for participants entering the Scheme since 1 July 2016 and who have been in the Scheme for at least 2 years.

### Participant choice and control

The choice and control metric for participants aged 15 and over is based on the question “Has the NDIS helped you have more choices and more control over your life?”

Positive perceptions of whether the NDIS has helped with choice and control have increased for the latest reassessment compared to the first reassessment across all age bands. Older participants tend to have higher levels of satisfaction than the 15 to 24 age group. Specifically, the percentage who think that the NDIS has helped them have more choices and more control over their life showed:<sup>28</sup>

- **nine** percentage point increase from **61%** to **70%** for participants aged 15 to 24 years
- **eleven** percentage point increase from **66%** to **78%** for participants aged 25 to 34 years
- **ten** percentage point increase from **69%** to **79%** for participants aged 35 to 44 years
- **ten** percentage point increase from **70%** to **80%** for participants aged 45 to 54 years
- **ten** percentage point increase from **71%** to **82%** for participants aged 55 to 64 years
- **twelve** percentage point increase from **71%** to **83%** for participants aged 65 years and older
- **ten percentage point increase from 67% to 77% for participants aged 15 years and older.**

The overall result of 77% compares to a 2023–24 target of 75%.

<sup>28</sup> Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage; differences are calculated from unrounded metrics.



### Other “Has the NDIS helped?” questions

For children aged from birth to before starting school, results have improved across all domains.

Figure 9 shows the percentages responding positively at first assessment and at latest reassessment, as well as the change between the 2 time points.

Figure 9: “Has the NDIS helped?” – participants aged from birth to before starting school<sup>29</sup>

Domain	First assessment %	Latest reassessment %	Percentage point change
Daily living: child’s development	91	94	+3
Daily living: access to specialist services	92	95	+3
Choice and control (child’s ability to communicate what they want)	83	87	+4
Relationships (fitting into family life)	77	83	+6
Social, community and civic participation (fitting into community life)	63	70	+7

Improvements were slightly stronger for fitting into family and community life (although results for these domains started off at a lower level and hence had more scope to improve).

For children aged from starting school to age 14, results are generally less positive than for the younger age group but show stronger improvement over time.

Figure 10 shows the percentages responding positively at first assessment and at latest reassessment, as well as the change between the 2 time points.

Figure 10: “Has the NDIS helped?” – participants from starting school to age 14<sup>30</sup>

Domain	First assessment %	Latest reassessment %	Percentage point change
Daily living (independence)	62	73	+12
Lifelong learning (access to education)	42	51	+10
Relationships (with family and friends)	50	60	+10
Social, community and civic participation (social and recreational life)	46	53	+7

<sup>29</sup> Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage; differences are calculated from unrounded metrics.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

For young adults aged 15 to 24 years, Figure 11 shows the percentages responding positively at first assessment and at latest reassessment, as well as the change between the 2 time points.

Figure 11: “Has the NDIS helped?” – participants aged 15 to 24<sup>31</sup>

Domain	First assessment %	Latest reassessment %	Percentage point change
Choice and control	61	70	+9
Daily living	61	72	+11
Relationships	50	54	+5
Home	22	21	-1
Health and wellbeing	44	51	+7
Lifelong learning	36	37	+2
Work	18	17	-1
Social, community and civic participation	55	62	+7

From Figure 11, the largest improvement over time in the Scheme has been observed for the daily living domain (11 percentage point increase). Strong improvements have also been observed for choice and control (9 percentage point increase), relationships (5 percentage point increase), health and wellbeing (7 percentage point increase) and social, community and civic participation (7 percentage point increase). Lifelong learning showed a marginal increase (2 percentage point increase), and there were slight declines for home and work.

For participants aged 25 years and over, perceptions tend to be more positive than for those aged 15 to 24, and the older adult group also shows a stronger improvement over time. Figure 12 shows the percentages responding positively at first assessment and latest reassessment, as well as the change between the 2 time points.

<sup>31</sup> Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage; differences are calculated from unrounded metrics.

Figure 12: “Has the NDIS helped?” – participants aged 25 and over<sup>32</sup>

Domain	First assessment %	Latest reassessment %	Percentage point change
Choice and control	69	80	+11
Daily living	73	84	+11
Relationships	53	62	+9
Home	31	35	+5
Health and wellbeing	52	61	+9
Lifelong learning	30	32	+2
Work	19	19	0
Social, community and civic participation	59	70	+10

From Figure 12, the largest improvements over time in the Scheme have been observed for daily living and choice and control (11 percentage point increase). Strong improvements have also been observed for relationships (9 percentage point increase), health and wellbeing (9 percentage point increase) and social, community and civic participation (10 percentage point increase). By contrast with the younger adult group, there was an improvement for the home domain (5 percentage point increase).

Similar to the younger adult group, lifelong learning showed a marginal increase (2 percentage point increase), and there was no material change for work.<sup>33</sup>

### Results continue to improve with time in Scheme

Responses tend to become more positive the longer a participant has been in the Scheme.

While these results are encouraging, the analysis also indicates that there are areas where outcomes could be improved. For example, for participants aged 25 and over, after at least 2 years in the Scheme, only 19% agreed that being in the NDIS had helped them find a suitable job, almost unchanged from their first plan reassessment.

The NDIA is actively working to improve participation in work, as discussed earlier in this section.

<sup>32</sup> Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage; differences are calculated from unrounded metrics.

<sup>33</sup> Noting that the education and housing systems have a major role to play in the lifelong learning and home domains.



### With the right supports, Holly's passion is now her career

Melbourne NDIS participant, Holly, says photography has helped her to express, share and improve her mental health, and now with NDIS funded therapies she's functioning at her best, even taking a massive step, starting Individual Photography, her very own business.

Using her NDIS funding, the 30-year-old, who has schizophrenia, a panic disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), said she engaged District 360 Supports to help her achieve her goals and now with tailored supports she is well on her way.

'Agnes at District 360 Supports has been great, and the supports I've been able to receive have really helped improve my life,' Holly said. 'She met mum and me face-to-face. She listened to my goals, was empathetic to my mental health issues and what I was hoping to achieve, then she found me the right supports.'

'With my mental health issues, at times it can be challenging to leave the house, but now I get funding to see a psychologist regularly, and I get support with daily living activities, like learning to cook, shopping, and cleaning and gardening around the house.'

'Agnes knew my main NDIS goal was to start my own business, but I didn't have the confidence to take that first step or the IT skills to build a website. I eventually found a website builder and she searched and interviewed support workers with IT skills, and she found Avinath who has been incredible,' she said.

'I have my own website which I'm proud of and I share my photos on Instagram, so now I'm keen to immerse myself into doing some really creative work.'

With her website ablaze with striking images, and securing awards, testament to her ability, Holly said her favourite work lies in her 'Portfolio Series,' which she feels is her strongest work.

'I've done a lot of wrestling and band photography in the past. Action photography is so rewarding. It's more than just settings, you must use timing and peripheral vision to get it perfect, but ultimately my dream is to do more high-profile gigs,' she said.

'I'd like to work with bigger bands and bigger wrestling companies, and one day do a photography exhibition to share and explain my mental health journey so people can better understand schizophrenia and mental health challenges and see, with the right supports, we can function just as well as anyone else. That would be a dream come true,' she said.

## Section 3: Participant experience



The NDIA's Service Charter sets out the delivery standards for what the NDIA is doing to meet participants' expectations.

The NDIA Participant Service Charter sets out what participants can expect from the NDIA and NDIS Partners in the Community organisations. It provides overall principles for interactions with participants and clear service standards and timeframes. These are included in the Participant Service Guarantee (PSG). The Participant Service Charter is also underpinned by the specific tangible actions listed in the participant Service Improvement Plan (SIP).

The Participant Service Charter is based on 5 principles for engagement with participants.

Engagement principle	What you can expect
<b>Transparent</b>	We will make it easy to access and understand our information and decisions.
<b>Responsive</b>	We will respond to individual needs and circumstances.
<b>Respectful</b>	We will recognise your individual experience and acknowledge you are an expert in your own life.
<b>Empowering</b>	We will make it easy to access information and be supported by the NDIS to lead your life.
<b>Connected</b>	We will support you to access the services and supports you need.

### 3.1 Participant Service Improvement Plan

The NDIA is committed to improving the service we provide to NDIS participants

That is why the NDIA introduced the Participant Service Charter and the SIP, which include the improvements the NDIA will make.

The SIP is the key to making real the promises in the Participant Service Charter and Participant Service Guarantee (PSG). It sets out what the NDIA and NDIS Partners in the Community are going to do to deliver an NDIS that meets expectations.<sup>34</sup> The NDIA continues to make progress against the SIP deliverables.

An outline of the activities underway as part of the SIP, and an update on progress, is available on the [NDIS website](#)<sup>35</sup>. The SIP activities are aligned to each of the 'what you can expect' statements in the Participant Service Charter. While the list is not exhaustive, the NDIA is continually looking for opportunities to improve our participant service in line with the engagement principles.

<sup>34</sup> Work is currently underway to develop a qualitative measurement framework and dashboard to report on the NDIA's performance against the engagement principles (and associated 'we will' commitments), as set out in the Participant Service Charter.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/policies/service-charter/participant-service-improvement-plan>

## 3.2 Participant Service Guarantee

The PSG sets clear timeframes for key NDIS processes.

The Participant Service Charter includes timeframes for our processes – set out under the PSG. Performance against the service standards is not available for the December 2023 quarter due to the NDIA's transition to its new computer system. Reporting for the majority of PSGs will be available in the March 2024 quarter.

## 3.3 Home and living decisions

The volume of home and living applications closed or implemented during the quarter continues to be high with the aim of improving participant experience.

The end-to-end process duration for home and living applications tracks the time taken from receipt of a home and living application form through to plan implementation.<sup>36</sup>

All home and living applications are prioritised based on an escalation and prioritisation matrix. This manages risks associated with safety, quality and outcomes to serve the best interests of participants.

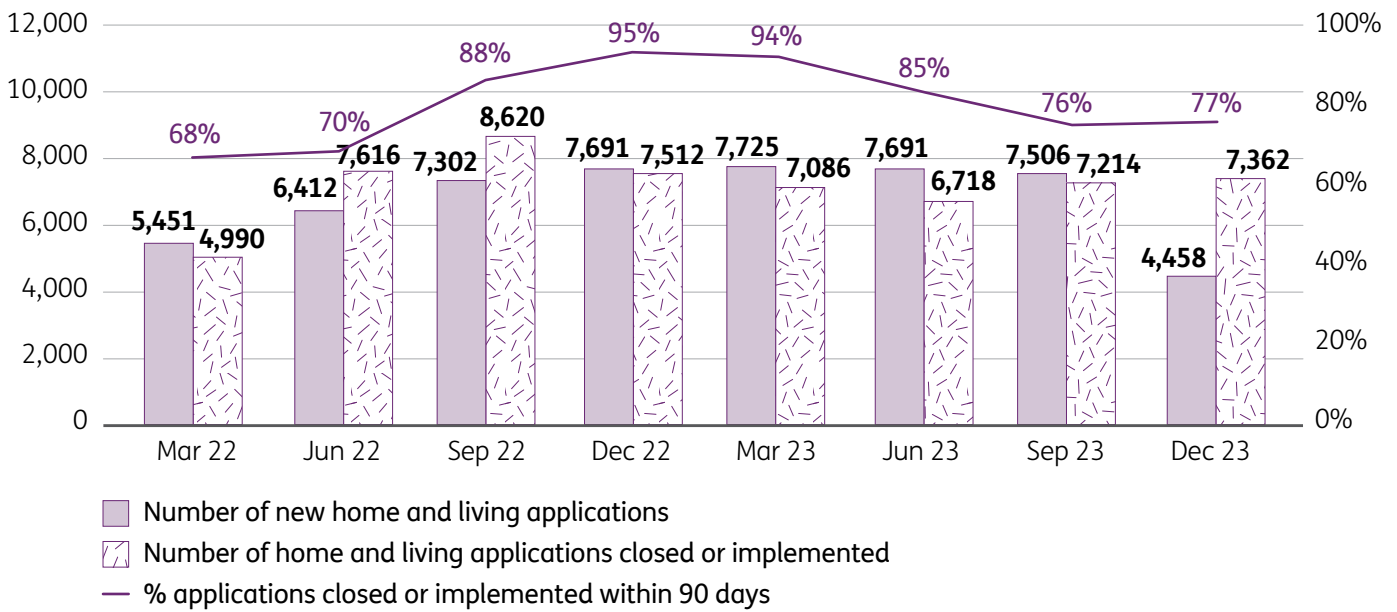
Over the December 2023 quarter there were 4,458 new home and living applications received. This compares to a quarterly average of 7,653 new requests over the previous 12 months. The lower number of home and living applications in the December 2023 quarter is attributed to adaptation to the new computer system and integration of new processes. In addition, as part of the Reform for Outcomes program to implement the Government's reforms, the NDIA is supporting participants and their families to have access to information and capacity building to better understand what their options are and to explore alternative living options. There were fewer Plan Reassessment Request (PRR) related home and living applications in the current quarter compared to previous quarters. In the December 2023 quarter, 7,362 home and living applications were closed or implemented and 77% (4,552) were finalised within 90 days.<sup>37, 38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> The time taken for participants to respond to requests for further information (RFI) has been removed from the duration.

<sup>37</sup> An application is considered closed if an application is cancelled or rejected, a participant is declined all home and living supports, or an application won't progress to implementation (e.g. deceased, participant chooses not to proceed etc.). An application is considered implemented once a participant has a new approved plan.

<sup>38</sup> 1,473 of the 7,362 applications that were closed or implemented had no data on the closure date and were excluded from the percentage of applications closed or implemented within 90 days.

Figure 13: Home and living applications – New, closed and % closed within 90 days<sup>39</sup>

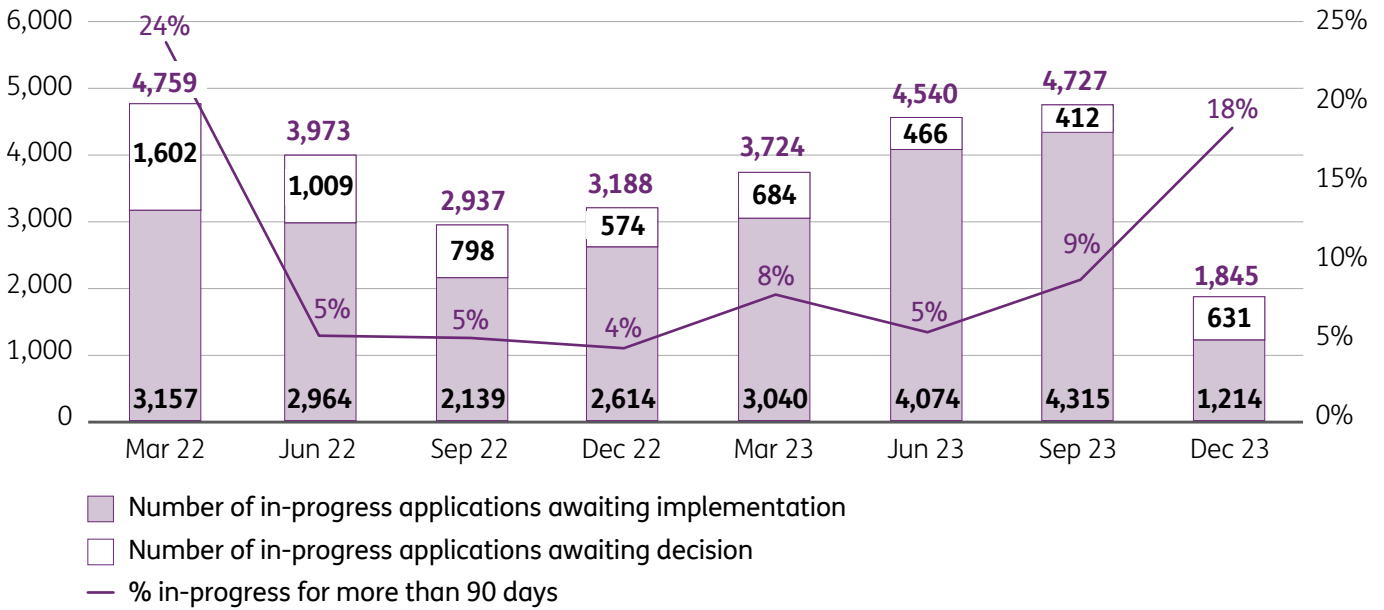


As at 31 December 2023, 1,845 applications remained in-progress. Of these in-progress applications, 1,214<sup>40</sup> were waiting for a decision, while a further 631 were waiting for supports to be implemented in a plan. As at 31 December 2023, 881 (48%) in-progress applications have been flagged as relating to PRR or Review of a Reviewable Decision (RoRD) requests.

Over the past quarter, the NDIA has commenced implementation of the Independent Living Initiative which was part of the 2023–2024 Commonwealth Reform for Outcomes Budget measures. This participant centric initiative aims to support consistent, equitable and quality home and living decisions that are aligned with the best interests of participants and their families. The majority of home and living applications are now reviewed and endorsed prior to approval during a Complex Assessment Meeting which incorporates a specialist home and living delegate. This has impacted the average decision time per home and living application at the same time as moderating growth in the number of SIL participants over the past quarter. This initiative, together with the high volumes of new home and living applications over the previous quarters, has contributed to the proportion that have remained in-progress for more than 90 days increasing from 9% (412 applications) as at 30 September 2023 to 18% (336 applications) as at 31 December 2023.<sup>41</sup>

39 Applications that have been closed or implemented with no data on the closure date have been excluded from the percentages of applications closed or implemented within 90 days.  
 40 The NDIA is waiting on additional information from participants for 744 out of the 1,214 applications awaiting a decision at the end of December.  
 41 The NDIA are continuing to investigate open applications to ensure next steps are underway for participants as part of an ongoing process.

Figure 14: Home and living applications – in-progress awaiting decision or implementation, % in-progress for more than 90 days<sup>42</sup>



### 3.4 Hospital discharge

The NDIA is continuing to focus on the safe and timely discharge of NDIS participants from hospital.

The NDIA is working with the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments on a continued commitment to improving the safe and timely discharge of NDIS participants from hospital. In the December 2023 quarter:

- The NDIA target of contacting NDIS participants within 4 days of the NDIA being notified of a participant's admission was **75%** in the December 2023 quarter, a reduction from **92%** in the September 2023 quarter. This drop is attributed to the introduction of a new Hospital Interface – collaborative access team (HI-CAT) pathway, which led to higher than expected request volumes.
- The average number of days between a NDIS participant being medically ready for discharge and being discharged was **21 days** in the December 2023 quarter, reducing from **24 days** in the September 2023 quarter and **27 days** in the June 2023 quarter.

<sup>42</sup> Applications on hold are excluded from the in-progress applications.



While there has been a decrease in the proportion of participants contacted within the 4-day target, the NDIA is refining the hospital interface pathway to improve its efficiency and streamline the experience for participants in hospital. Additional steps are also being taken to further support the safe and timely discharge of NDIS participants from hospital, including:

- Immediate re-allocation of additional resources to support higher-than-expected volumes
- Additional reporting to enable better redirection of resources.

Additional staff are being recruited and trained and will be available by February.

The NDIA is also working closely with states and territories to enhance their understanding of the new interface pathway, including the provision of information packages and information sessions. Further, escalation pathways are in place for all states and territories to prevent delays for people who are medically ready for discharge.

### 3.5 Complaints, Participant Critical Incidents, Review Requests and Administrative Appeals Tribunal cases

The NDIA is seeing a decrease in the number of RoRD cases while the numbers of Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) cases and complaints are higher compared to prior quarters.

#### Complaints<sup>43,44,45,46</sup>

Complaints may be lodged by participants, providers or by others including members of the public, other government agencies or community organisations.

The NDIA maintains a service standard under which it aims to resolve 90% of complaints within 21 days after they are received. In the last 2 quarters, there has been an increase in complaints, which has resulted in increased volumes and ageing work on hand. The NDIA is prioritising ageing complaints for resolution.

Participant complaints as a proportion of active participants averaged 5.9% over the 3 quarters to June 2022, then improved to 4.7% by the December 2022 quarter. The participant complaint rate increased to 6.0% in the December 2023 quarter. 394 complaints were received from providers over the quarter, which is equivalent to 3.7% of registered providers making a complaint. A greater focus on the NDIA as a result of the NDIS Review and the DRC may have contributed to increased complaints in recent quarters. While the trend may continue in the short term, work continues on improving the NDIA's systems and processes. This includes the national rollout of the new computer system, which will improve services and help to reduce complaints in future periods.

A further 314 complaints were received from other sources in the December 2023 quarter.

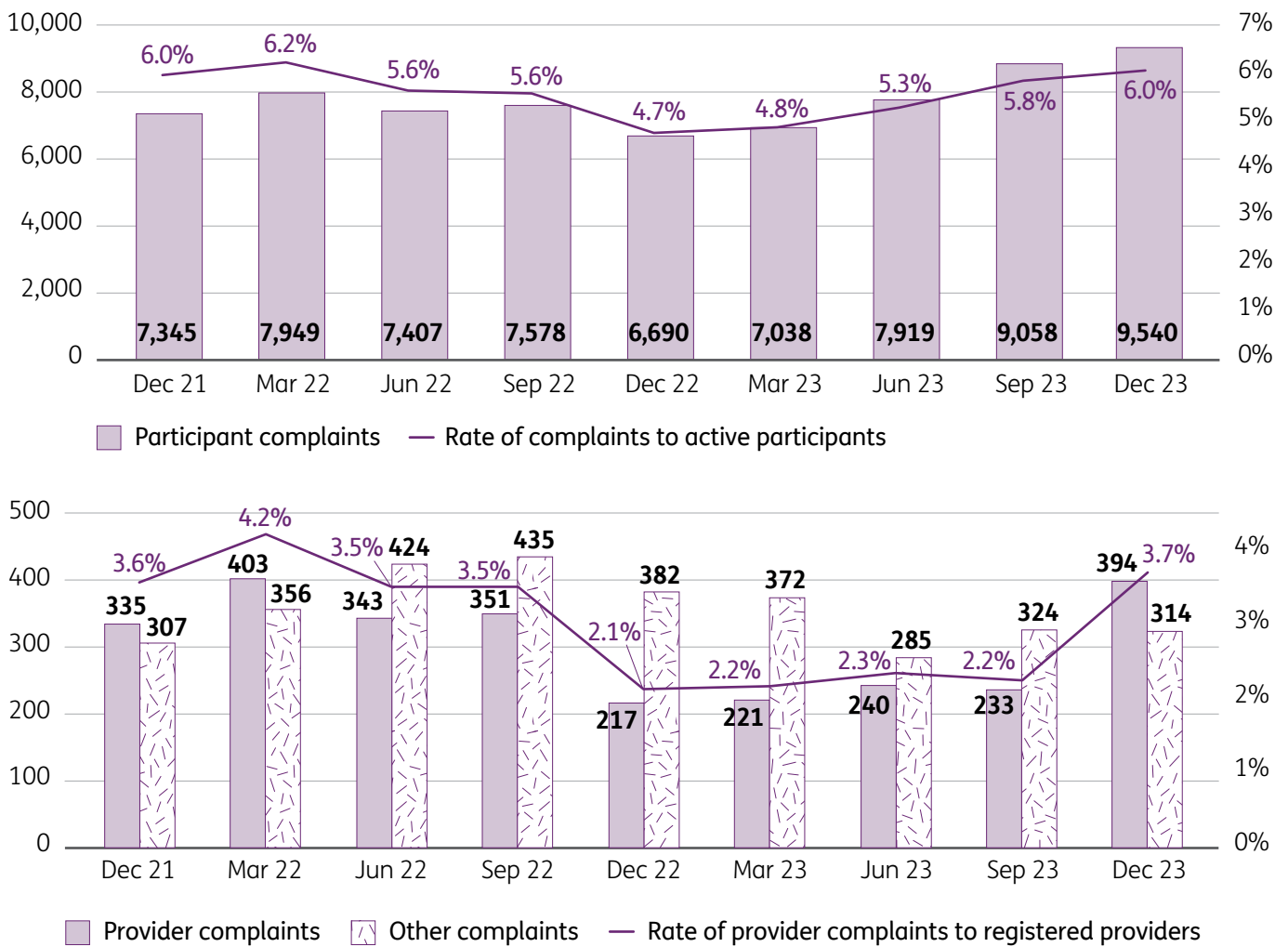
43 In the 'My Customer Requests' tile launched in October 2019, it is possible to record multiple related parties as the source of a complaint and in some cases both participants and providers or other parties are linked to a single case. Previously, the single source was often recorded as a participant regardless of whether a provider was associated with the complaint.

44 The numbers of complaints reported for the most recent quarter may still increase to the extent there is a lag in data collection. However, any increase is not expected to have a material impact on the results.

45 The historical number of complaints reported prior to the June 2023 QRDM has changed due to Participant Critical Incidents being reported separately from the June 2023 QRDM onwards, see later in the section for further details.

46 The higher number of complaints in December 2023 quarter is attributed to adaptation to the new computer system and integration of new processes.

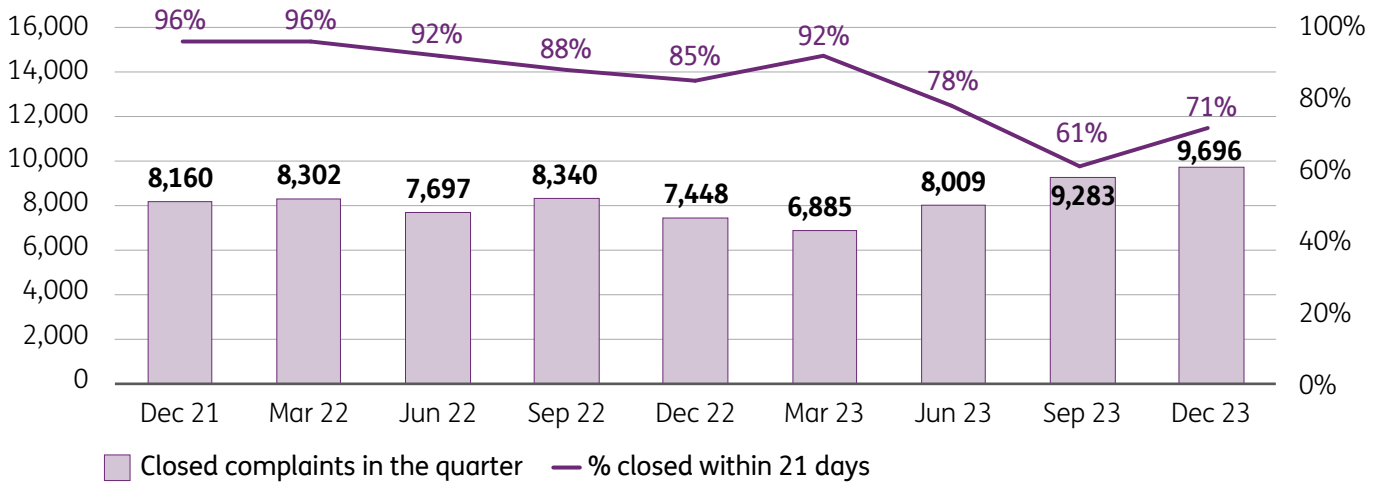
Figure 15: Number of proportion of participant (top), and provider and other (bottom) complaints over time



84% of participant complaints closed in the December 2023 quarter had an outcome of desired action completed.

On average, around 75% of complaints have been closed within 21 days in the past 4 quarters. This proportion has declined from levels seen in 2021. The NDIA is monitoring workloads and is working to close complaints as soon as possible. Work is underway to enhance complaint handling practices and systems which will contribute to more timely complaint resolutions in line with the PSG in coming quarters.

Figure 16: Closed complaints and percentage completed within 21-day timeframe



The increased volume of complaints in the recent quarters has resulted in an increase in the percentage of complaints open for more than 21 days, from 10% at September 2023 to 42% in the December 2023 quarter. This is attributed to adaptation to the new system and integration of new processes. The NDIA is prioritising the resolution of these complaints and is supporting its workforce to continue to build capability with the new system and processes.

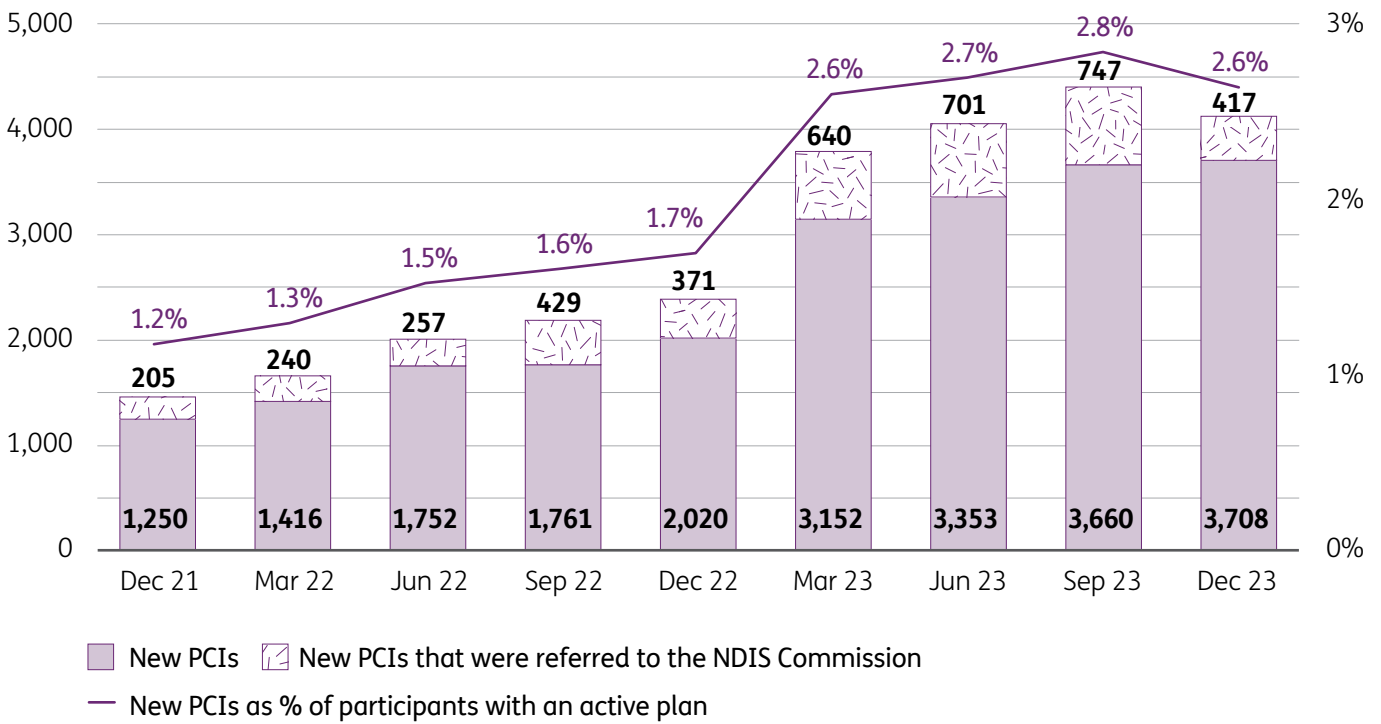
**Participant Critical Incidents**

While working with participants, their families and carers, providers or mainstream services, NDIA staff and partner staff may encounter circumstances or obtain information about allegations of harm occurring to a participant. After taking immediate safeguarding actions, staff and NDIS Partners in the Community report a Participant Critical Incident (PCI). All PCI reports are prioritised for action based on the level of risk to the participant.

There has been an increase in the total volume of PCIs received in recent quarters where the proportion of PCIs as a percentage of participants with an active plan has increased from approximately 1.5%, on average, up to December 2022 to 2.6% in the most recent quarter. This increase has been due to an increased awareness of financial abuse in the community and improved reporting of PCIs over the last 4 quarters.

The total volume of PCIs received in the December 2023 quarter reduced since the last quarter. The largest contributor to PCIs in the December 2023 quarter was abuse or neglect of a person with disability, followed by reports of self harm.

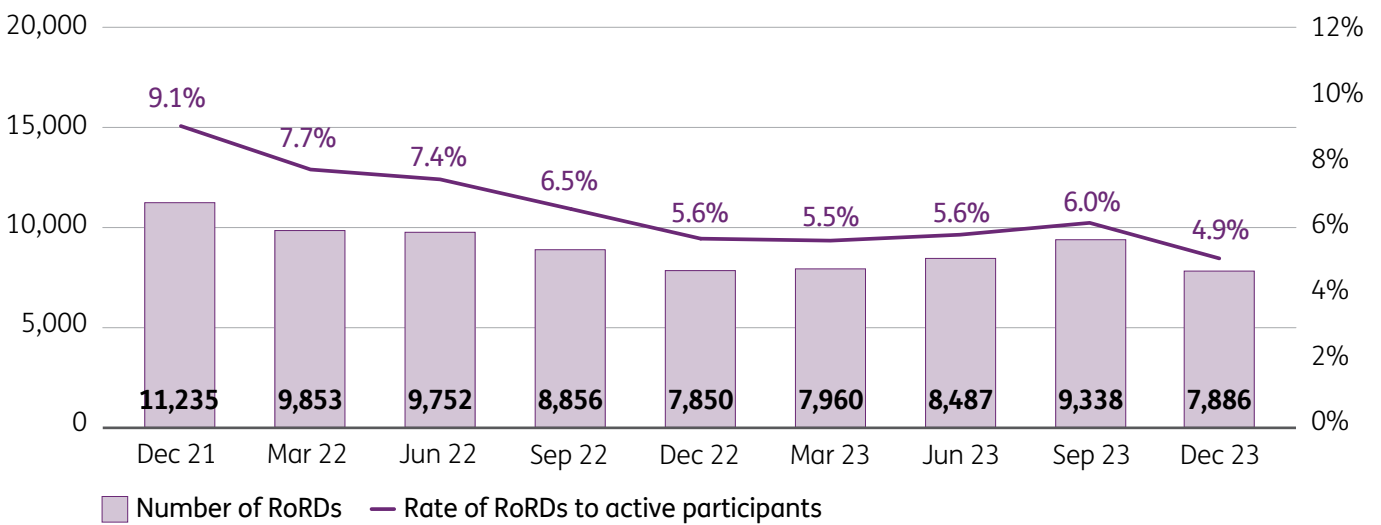
Figure 17: Number and proportion of new PCIs<sup>47</sup>



**Review of a Reviewable Decision**

The number of RoRDs as a percentage of active participants has decreased from 9.1% in the December 2021 quarter to 4.9% in the December 2023 quarter. In addition to a seasonal decrease, the lower number of RoRDs in the December 2023 quarter is attributed to adaptation to the new computer system and integration of new processes.

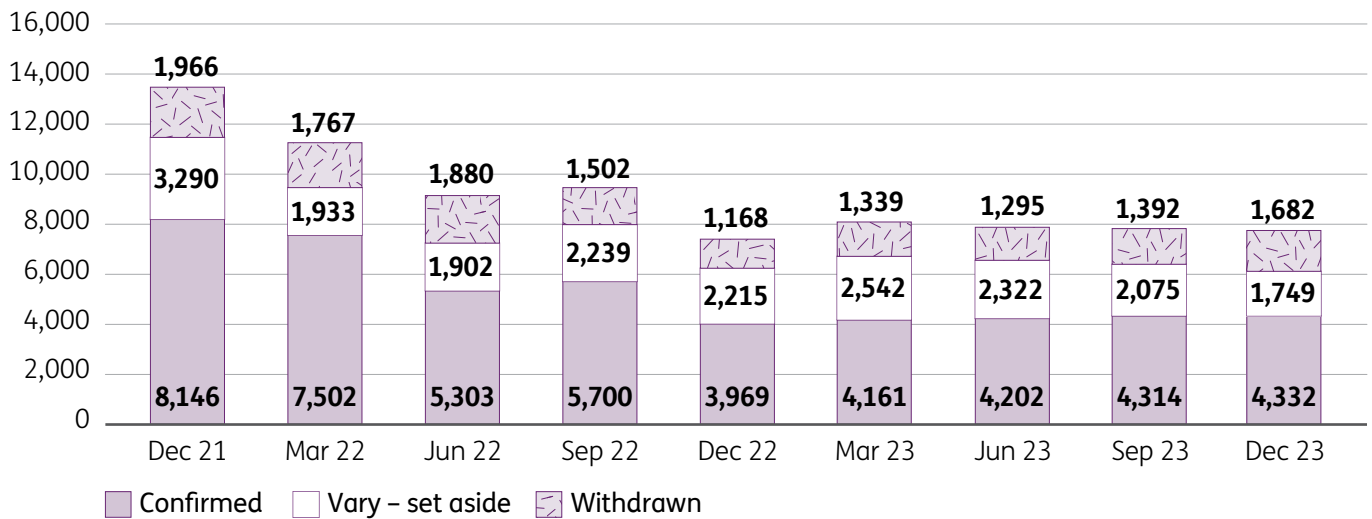
Figure 18: Requests for a RoRD



<sup>47</sup> The number of PCIs in the current quarter may change in the future as the method of identifying PCIs in the new computer system is enhanced further.

There were 7,763 RoRDs closed in the December 2023 quarter, including 1,682 requests withdrawn. Of the remaining closed RoRDs, 4,332 confirmed the NDIA's decision, meaning there was no change from the NDIA's original decision. Further, there were 1,749 decisions to amend or set aside the decision of the original decision-maker. Decisions are often varied or set aside as further evidence is obtained during the review process.

Figure 19: Closed RoRDs by outcomes – quarterly trend



### Administrative Appeals Tribunal

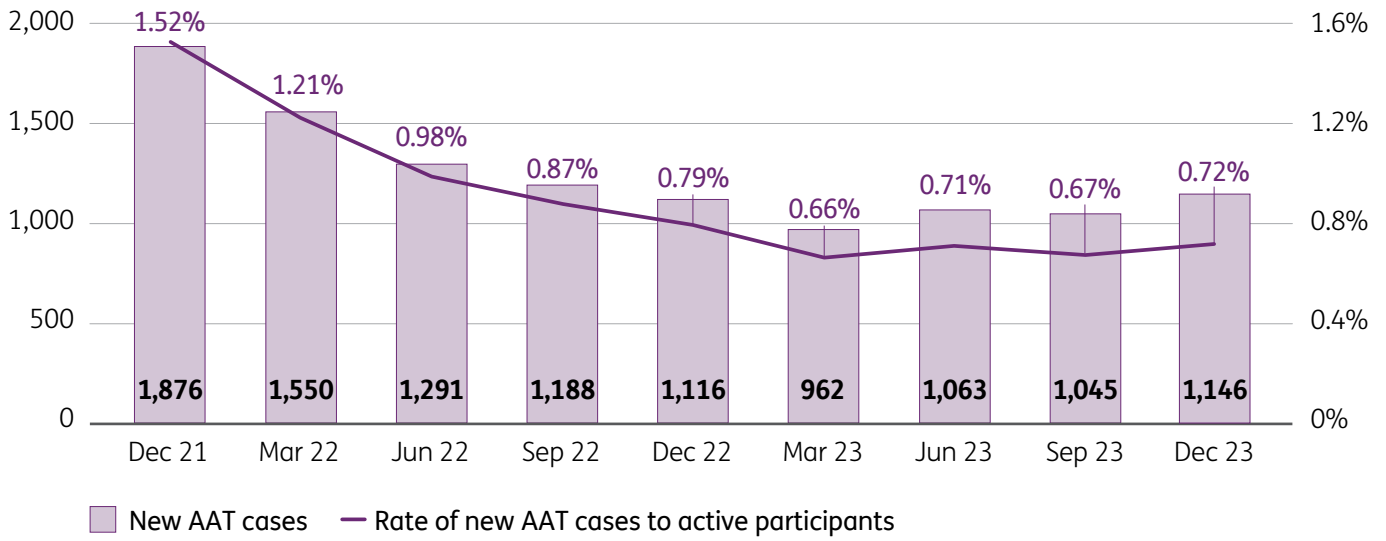
If a person is not satisfied with the outcome of their review, they may apply to the AAT for review of a decision made by a reviewer. The NDIA is committed to acting as a model litigant in the AAT as required by the Legal Services Directions 2017. In doing so, the NDIA works with applicants and their legal representatives to resolve their matters as early as possible in the AAT process.<sup>48,49</sup>

There were 1,146 new AAT cases in the December 2023 quarter, relating to 1,125 participants. The number of new AAT cases (as a proportion of active participants) has decreased since the December 2021 peak of 1.52% to 0.72% in the December 2023 quarter. The decrease was due, in part, to the Independent Expert Review trial which was one of the Alternative Dispute Resolution initiatives introduced to reduce the AAT case backlog and improve dispute resolution processes.

48 As part of the AAT process, it is not uncommon for new requests to be made and for new evidence to be provided by applicants while their matters are in progress. This contributes to NDIS decisions being varied in the AAT.

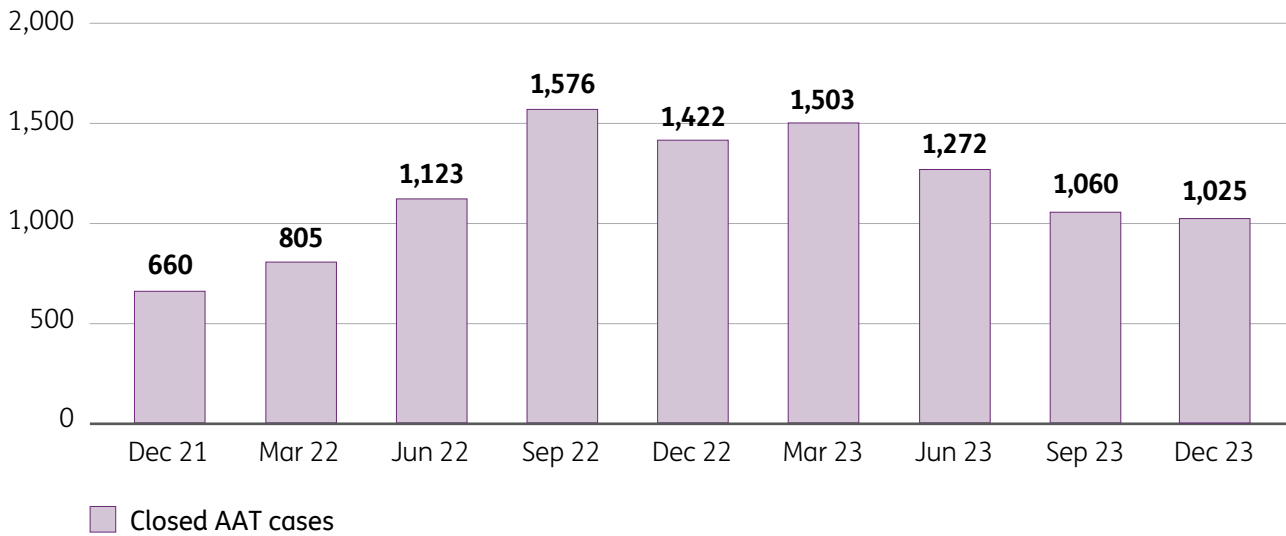
49 Further information about the AAT process can be found on the AAT website: <https://www.aat.gov.au/apply-for-a-review/national-disability-insurance-scheme-ndis/can-we-help>

Figure 20: Number and proportion of new AAT cases



In the December 2023 quarter, there were 1,025 closed AAT cases. Of the cases no longer before the AAT, approximately 72% were resolved by agreement, 25% were withdrawn by the applicant or dismissed by the AAT and 3% proceeded to a (substantive) hearing.<sup>50</sup>

Figure 21: Number of closed AAT cases

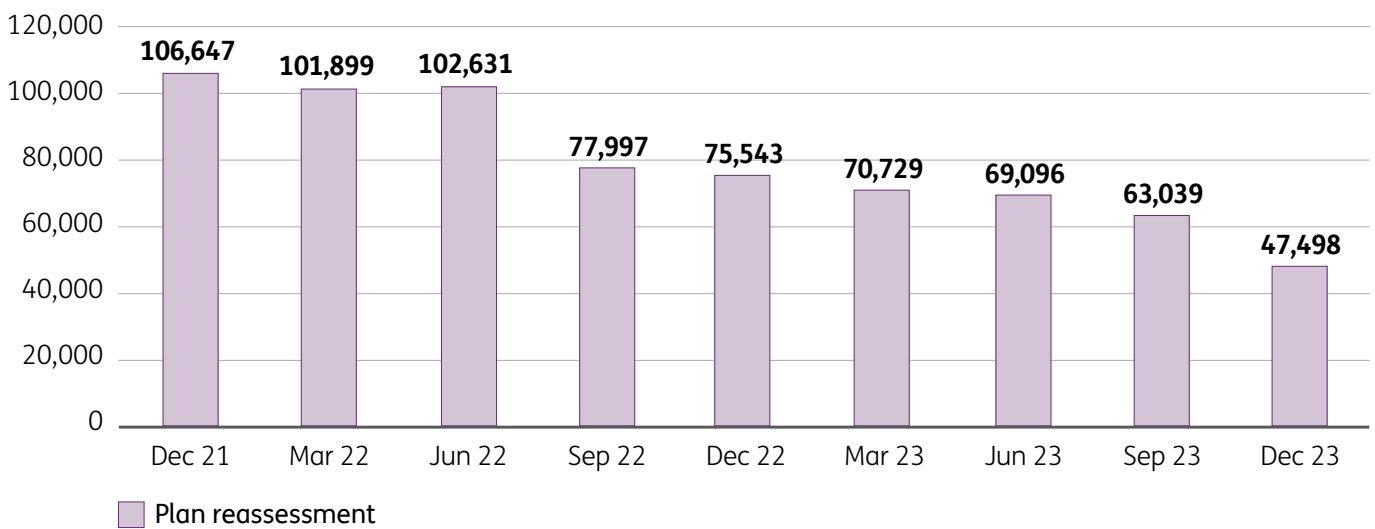


<sup>50</sup> Less than 1% of cases were related to applications for an extension of time which were declined by the AAT or not opposed by the NDIA, matters over which the AAT has no jurisdiction, and reasons that were unspecified.

**Plan reassessments**

There were 47,498 plan reassessments conducted in the December 2023 quarter. Plan reassessments for the December 2023 quarter do not include records that have been migrated to the new computer system (see section 6.6 for further information). Additionally, there has been a reduction in plan reassessments since the June 2022 quarter, due to a plan continuation strategy. This strategy involves communicating with the participant to ensure there have been no significant changes in their circumstances and, with agreement from the participant, continuing their existing plan. Of the 47,498 plan reassessments conducted in the December 2023 quarter, 30,916 (65%) were initiated by the Agency and 16,582 (35%) were requested by participants. Agency-initiated plan reassessments occur as plans are due to expire, and a new plan is required.

Figure 22: Number of plan reassessments<sup>51</sup>



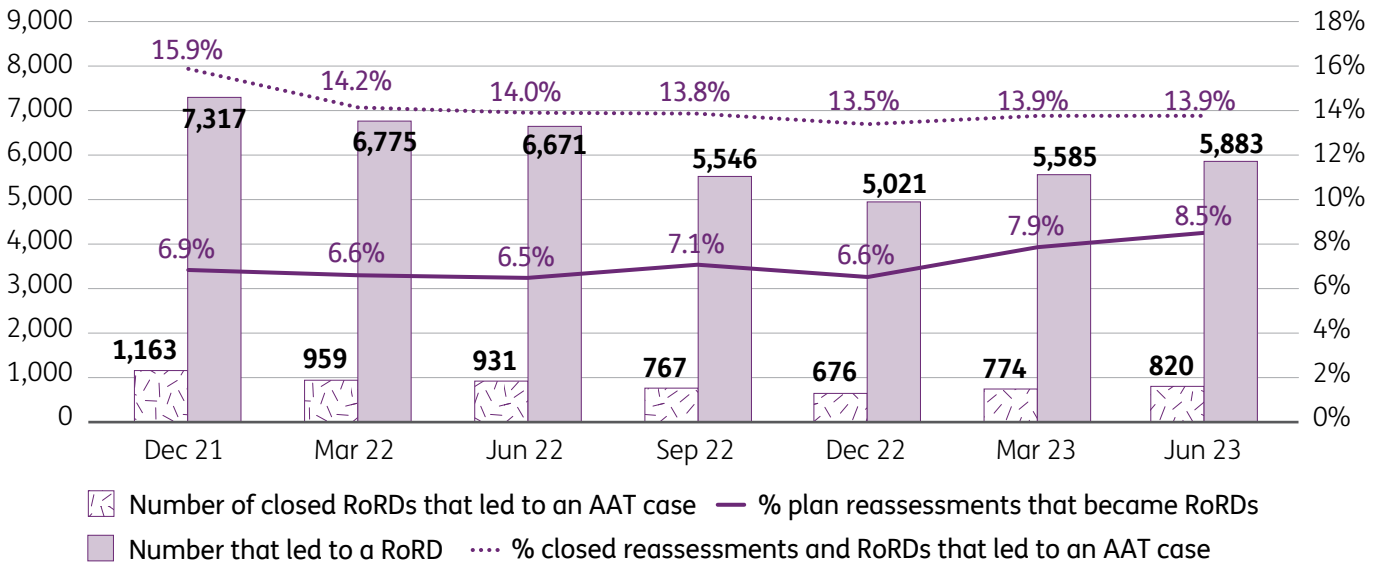
<sup>51</sup> Short plans (plans with a duration less than or equal to 30 days) have been excluded. The numbers of plan reassessments in historical periods have been updated with retrospective data changes.

**Pathway from plan reassessments to RoRDs and AAT cases<sup>52</sup>**

A participant may request a RoRD and then further appeal to the AAT. The following figure shows the pathway from plan reassessments to RoRDs and AAT cases between 1 October 2021 and 30 June 2023.

The proportion of RoRDs arising from plan reassessments has increased from a low of 6.5% (6,671 RoRDs) in the June 2022 quarter to 8.5% (5,883 RoRDs) in the June 2023 quarter. The proportion of AATs arising from RoRDs has remained relatively stable since the March 2022 quarter.

Figure 23: Pathway from plan reassessment to RoRDs and AAT cases between 1 October 2021 and 30 June 2023 at 31 December 2023



<sup>52</sup> Figures do not capture records that have been migrated to the new computer system, see section 6.6 for further information.



### 3.6 Participant satisfaction

#### Changes to the Participant Satisfaction Survey were rolled out this quarter.

Changes are being made to the Participant Satisfaction Survey (PSS) to align with the national rollout of the NDIA's new computer system and processes, and to better support measurement against PSG engagement principles. The revised survey will contribute to a PSG qualitative performance measurement and reporting framework, which was a recommendation of the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman in response to the Tune Review.

Initial changes to the PSS were introduced for the December 2023 monthly data collection. Due to the resulting discontinuity, the present quarterly report only includes data for October and November 2023. Data for December 2023 will be included in the next Quarterly Report to disability ministers.

#### Participant satisfaction has remained in line with previous quarters.

This quarter, 86% of participants rated the planning process as either good or very good, with a further 9% rating the experience as neutral. 79% of the participants in the quarter rated the access process as either good or very good, 79% rated the pre-planning process as either good or very good, and 65% rated the plan reassessment process as either good or very good.<sup>53</sup>

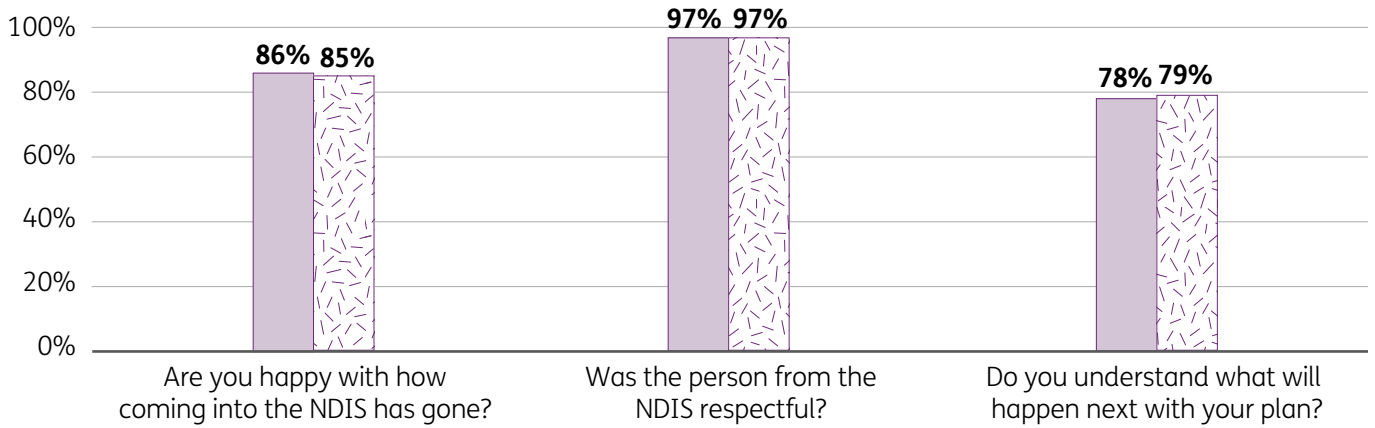
Figure 24: Rating of experience with the NDIS (1 October 2023 to 30 November 2023)

	Access	Pre-planning	Planning	Plan reassessment
Very good/good	79%	79%	86%	65%
Neutral	9%	13%	9%	15%
Poor/very poor	11%	8%	5%	20%

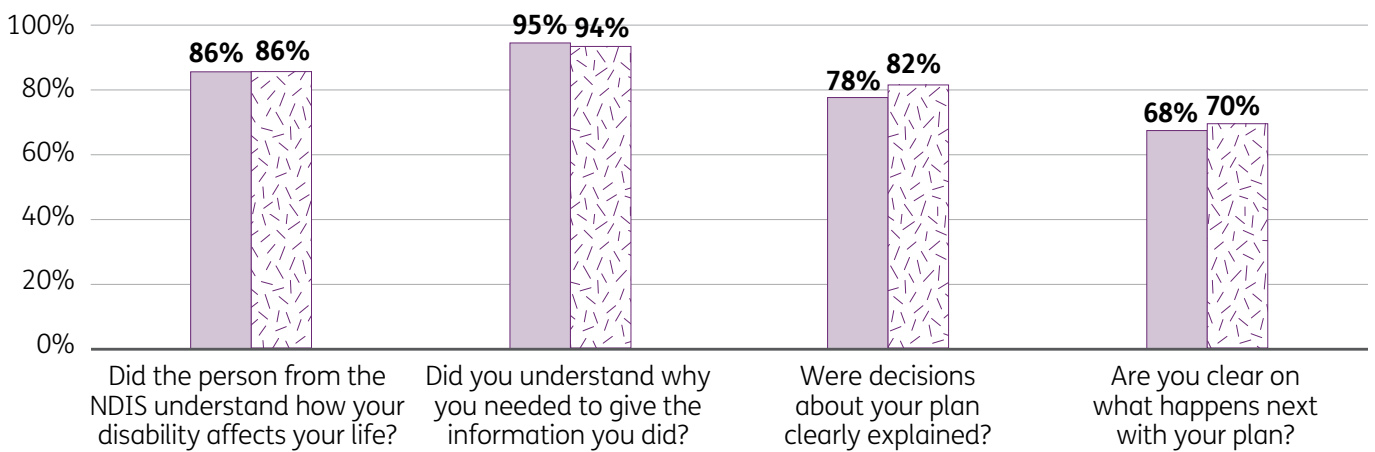
53 These results are based on 793 surveys at access, 606 at pre-planning, 3,252 at planning and 6,167 at plan reassessment, which is 10,818 in total.

Figure 25: Satisfaction across the four stages of the pathway<sup>54</sup>

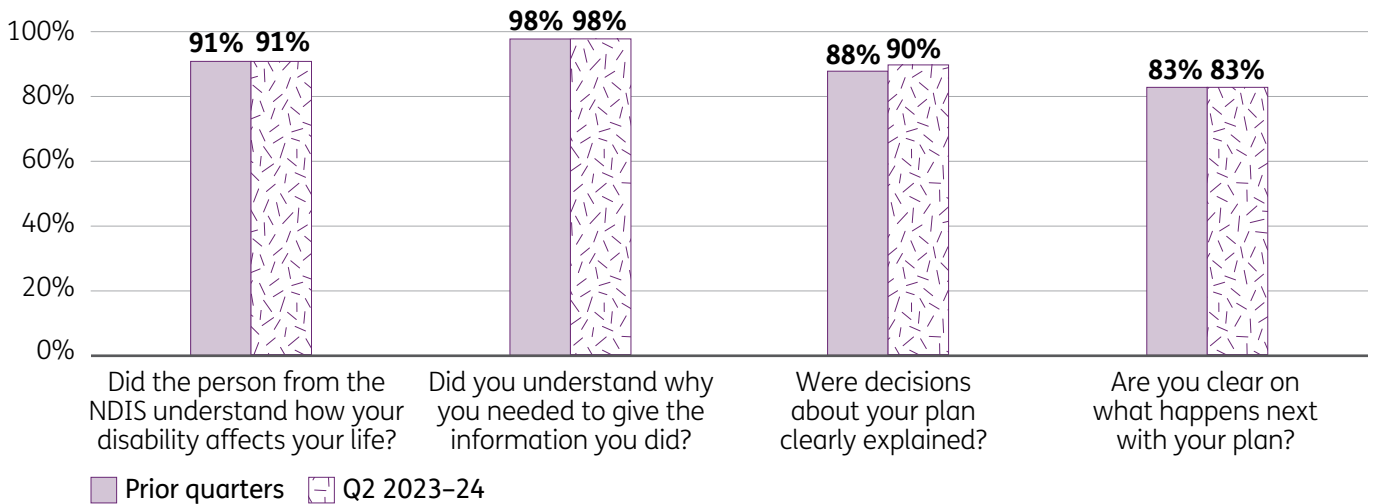
Stage one: Access



Stage two: Pre-planning



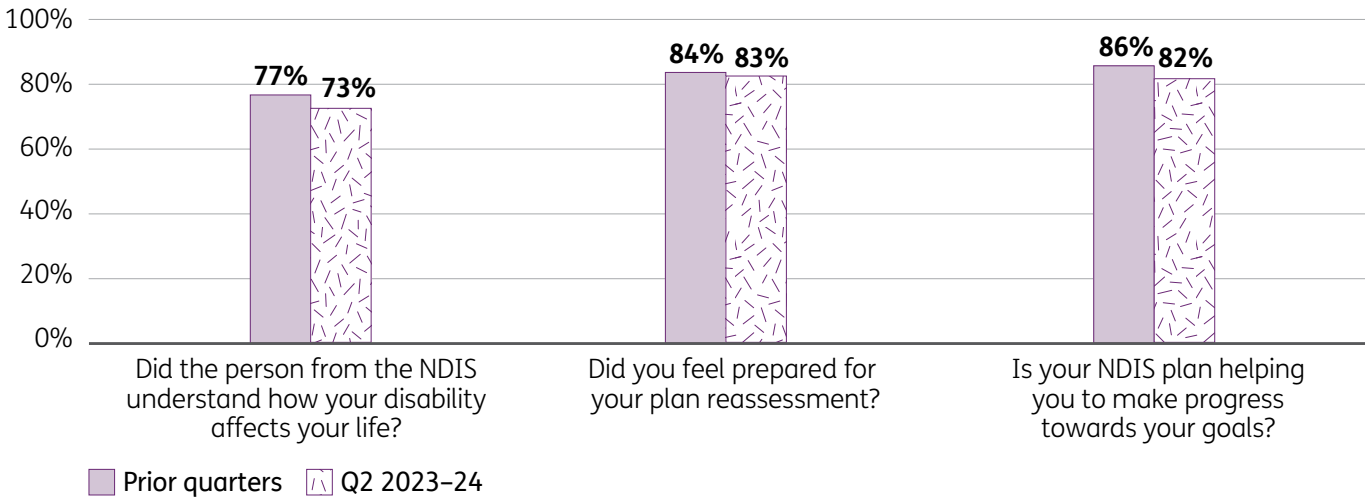
Stage three: Planning



<sup>54</sup> Prior quarters include responses from 1 October 2020.

Figure 25: Satisfaction across the four stages of the pathway<sup>55</sup> cont.

Stage four: Plan reassessment



The surveys also include questions that provide further insights at each stage of the pathway. The results (Figure 25) indicate that satisfaction for the December 2023 quarter is in line with prior quarters for most questions about the first 3 pathway stages, although satisfaction declined slightly in relation to plan reassessment.

For this quarter and historically, the percentage of participants who have a clear understanding of what happens next with their plan in the first 3 stages of the participant pathway has been lower than the positive response rate for other questions. For example, at planning, 83% were clear on what happens next with their plan (similar to previous quarters). This is lower than the percentage of participants responding positively to other questions about planning, which are between 90% and 98%.

Participants surveyed responded very positively to questions on whether the NDIS person they engaged with was respectful, and whether they understood why they needed to provide the information they did.

<sup>55</sup> Prior quarters include responses from 1 October 2020.

### 3.7 The NDIA National Contact Centre

The NCC provides personal and high-quality services and information about the NDIS for people with disability, their family and carers, and service providers.

In the December 2023 quarter, the transformation of the NCC continued. Key highlights included ongoing recruitment for the insourced contact centre, transition of the NCC outsourced partner onto the new Agency-managed contact centre technology platform, as well as additional process changes to improve first contact resolution.

During this quarter, the NCC continued with the implementation of its transformation strategy.

This included further recruitment for the insourced contact centre operations team, growing operations across 3 sites to increase employment opportunities, minimise shift work and support careers in the NDIA. By the end of the quarter, 156 Australian Public Service (APS) NCC operations roles were filled across 3 sites in Dandenong (Victoria), Robina (Queensland) and Midland (Western Australia). The partial insourcing of the contact centre enabled the movement of complex enquiries to APS staff who can provide advice on technical questions, reducing referrals, and improving first contact resolution.

At the end of the December 2023 quarter, the insourced NCC exceeded disability targets with 42% of the NCC Operations team identifying as having a disability.

The NCC also transitioned additional key service processes to contact centre staff, enabling the NCC to resolve more transactions at the first point of contact. This included actioning existing Child Representatives requesting to be payment nominees and managing low-cost assistive technology requests, thereby reducing the need to refer to other areas in the Agency.

The NCC's outsourced partner, Serco, transitioned to the new Agency-managed contact centre technology platform during the December 2023 quarter. This new platform provides improved capabilities to drive first contact resolution and enhance the contact experience. The platform features speech analytics capability enabling the NDIA to better understand contact trends and the drivers of participant dissatisfaction with service issues. The new platform also enables future integration with NDIA's new computer system and automated identity verification processes.

Due to the transition to the new Agency-managed contact centre technology platform (Amazon Connect), data relating to 'telephony customer experience' and 'webchats' from 20 November 2023 is not yet available. The NCC is working to ensure consistency in reporting and these results will be available next quarter.

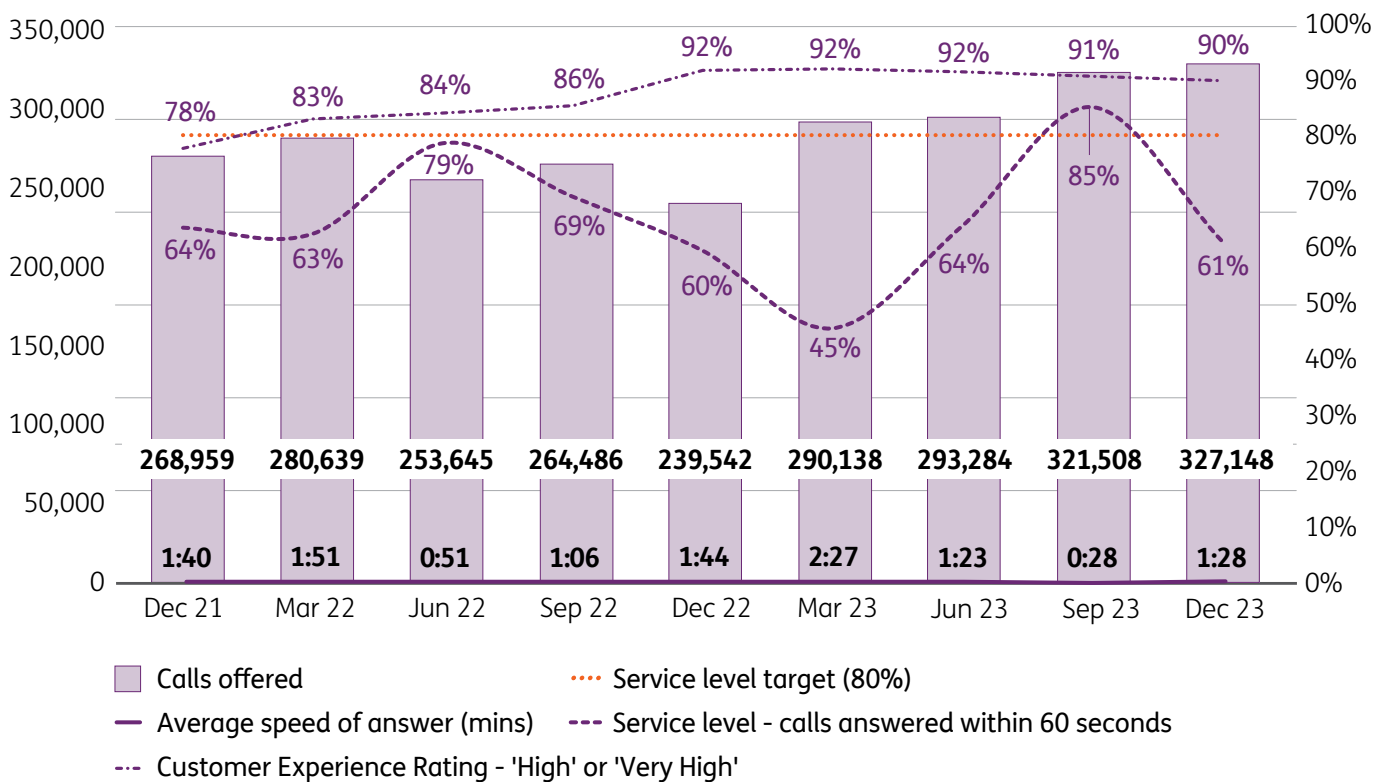
The NCC has delivered the following results for the December 2023 quarter:

- Higher than expected call volumes (+12% above forecast) were received with 327,148 calls offered, up 2% from the previous quarter and an increase of 36.6% the December 2022 quarter.
- An increased rate of contact per participant with calls related to planning, plan changes and provider enquiries driving demand. These call types, and processes introduced with the new computer system, have a longer average handle time, which increased total workload and resources required to answer contacts.

Section 3: Participant experience

- The NCC is currently recruiting additional resources to meet the increased level of demand.
- Call answering performance was 60.8% of calls answered in 60 seconds (80% target) due to the demand exceeding planned capacity, as outlined above. However, the average speed of answer for telephony contacts was only 88 seconds, noting though that there were no complaints about call wait times during the quarter.
- For the period 1 September 2023 to 19 November 2023, customer experience remained strong, with 90% of post call survey respondents scoring their experience with the NCC as ‘High’ or ‘Very High’. For the period 1 September 2023 to 19 November 2023, 19,682 webchats were offered. 70% of all webchats received were answered within 20 seconds (80% target).
- 256,589 emails were received in the December 2023 quarter, up 13.8% from the same quarter last year. 27% of emails were responded to within 2 business days. The average wait time for email responses was 7 business days for the December 2023 quarter.

Figure 26: Telephony grade of service, average speed of answer, call volume and customer experience results<sup>56</sup>



56 Results from 20 November 2023 are not available for the December 2023 quarter.

Section 3: Participant experience

Figure 27: Webchat grade of service and offered chat volume<sup>57</sup>

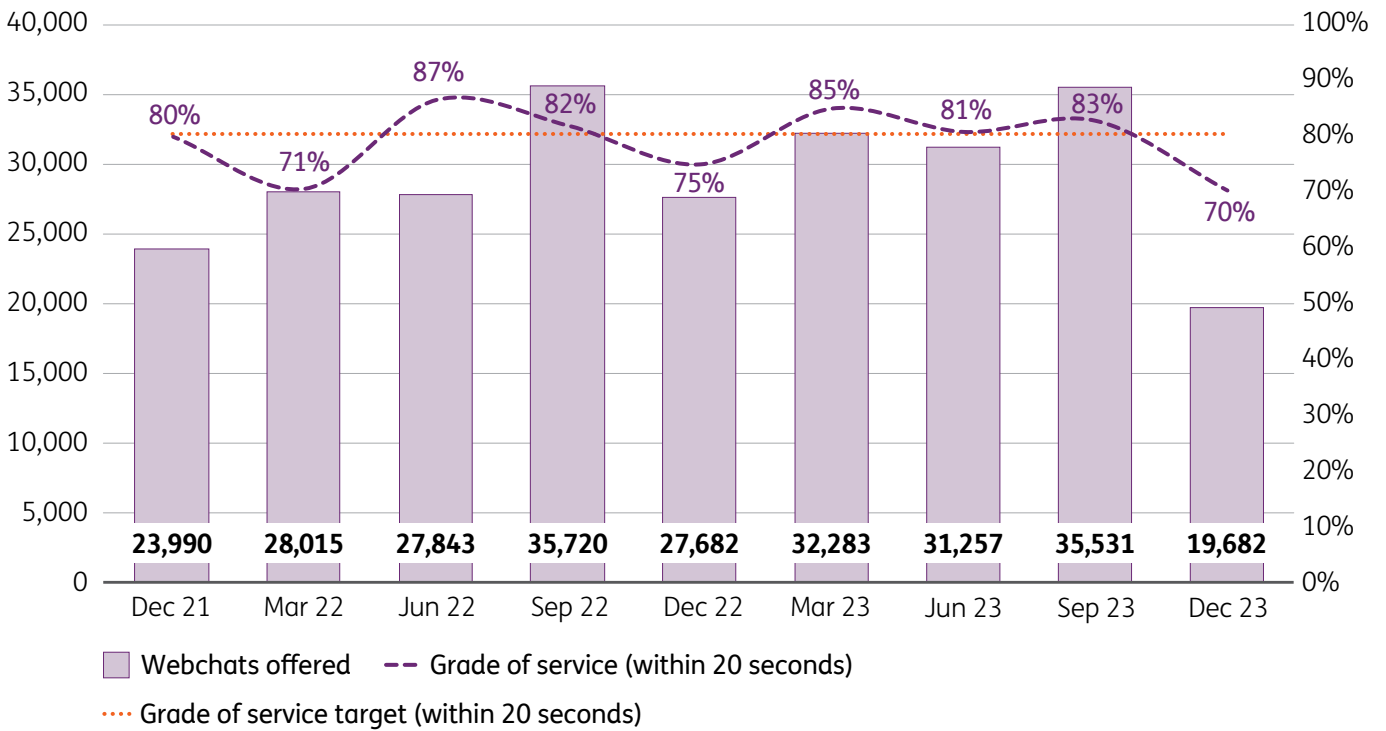
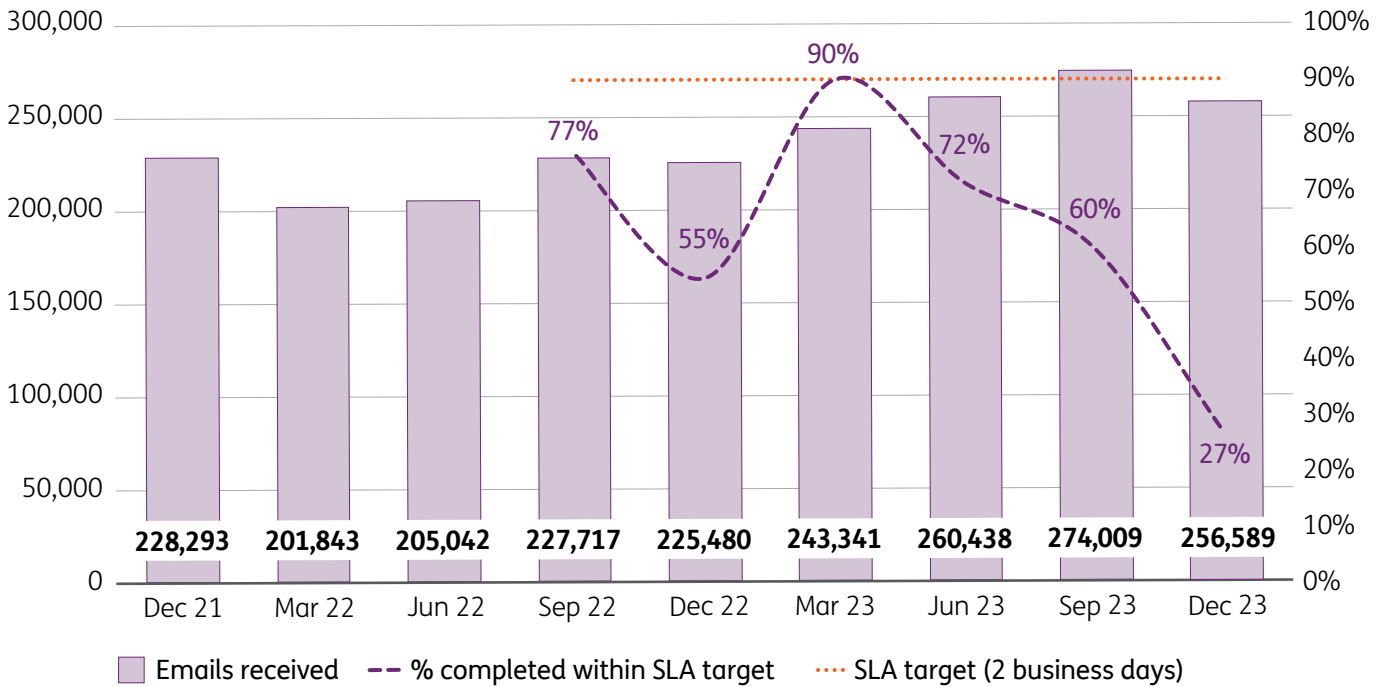


Figure 28: Email grade of service and email volume



<sup>57</sup> Results from 20 November 2023 are not available for the December 2023 quarter.



## Henry's V/Line dream comes true just in time for Christmas

Sutton Grange NDIS participant Henry John is right where he wants to be, working for V/Line, Victoria's largest regional train and bus network.

The 21-year-old, who has autism and who has overcome speech difficulties thanks to NDIS supports, is now working part-time as a station assistant at Bendigo railway station.

'I can't believe I'm finally working for V/Line. It's a dream come true, and I'm one step closer to my long-term employment goal to one day become a conductor,' Henry said.

To get to this point Henry used his NDIS employment supports to engage Scott Mclarty, a career mentor from local disability employment provider Connecting Futures Australia. Scott worked with Henry to identify his strengths and skills, help build his confidence; connect him with young adults

with similar interests to build his friendship groups and provide additional support to help him become independent and job ready.

'I wouldn't be where I am today without the NDIS and Scott's support. Living with autism is challenging. After leaving school I realised I did need a bit more help than others,' Henry said.

'My speech was a huge barrier, so my mum and stepfather helped me to get NDIS funding. It meant I could start looking around for employment support and speech therapy.'

'Scott helped me with my resume, showed me how to write a good cover letter and we did mock job interviews.'

Scott also supported Henry through an employment training program called BOUNCE to determine his level of work-readiness.

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**'BOUNCE helped to build my confidence and it also helped me to set clear goals about what I wanted to achieve,' Henry said.**

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Scott worked hard behind the scenes connecting with V/Line to discuss possible work experience and Henry was granted a V/Line internship, working at Bendigo station 2 days a week over 6 weeks.

'I was so excited. Everyone was so inclusive and supportive. I learnt a lot,' he said.

Not long after Henry's internship finished, Henry said he saw an opening advertised for a local part-time service officer at Bendigo station. Henry applied and the rest is history.

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**'I'm working a job I really enjoy and now I'm truly confident about my future,' he said.**

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## Section 4: Providers and the growing market



The provider market continues to grow.

### 4.1 Support categories

The largest support categories are core support for daily activities, core support for social and community participation, and capacity building for daily activities.

\$38.3 billion in support has been provided in the 12 months to 31 December 2023.<sup>58</sup> The largest support categories are core daily activities (52% of total payments), core social and community participation (23% of total payments), and capacity building daily activities (13% of total payments). Core daily activities includes participants in Supported Independent Living (SIL). \$9.9 billion of the \$19.8 billion payments on core daily activities in the 12 months to 31 December 2023 was for payments for participants in SIL.

Figure 29: Total payments from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

Support category	Total payments (in \$m)	% of total payments
Core – daily activities	19,827	51.8%
Core – community	8,657	22.6%
Core – consumables & transport	1,467	3.8%
Capacity building – daily activities <sup>59</sup>	4,842	12.6%
Capacity building – other	2,446	6.4%
Capital	1,042	2.7%
<b>Total<sup>60</sup></b>	<b>38,288</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Over the last 2 years, payments have grown by 49% (from \$25.6 billion for the year ending 31 December 2021 to \$38.3 billion for the year ending 31 December 2023). Payments have grown across the support categories, most notably for core daily activities and core social and community participation (growing by 52% in aggregate over the period).

<sup>58</sup> This represents total payments on a cash basis (including payments made under in-kind arrangements). On an accrual basis, total payments were \$38.9 billion.

<sup>59</sup> Includes therapy services.

<sup>60</sup> Total includes \$8 million of payments with no support category.



## 4.2 Plan management types

There has been a significant shift in plan management, with an increasing number of participants choosing to use a plan manager rather than have the NDIA manage their plan.

Over the past 2 years, the proportion of participants who:

- **Self-manage** all or part of their plan has decreased from **30%** to **29%**
- Use a **plan manager** has increased from **53%** to **62%**
- Have an **Agency-managed** plan has decreased from **17%** to **9%**.

Out of 198,777 active providers in the December 2023 quarter, 8,766<sup>61</sup> providers provided support to Agency-managed participants, 179,172<sup>62</sup> providers provided support to plan-managed participants and 46,492<sup>63</sup> providers provided support to self-managed participants.

Over the past 2 years, the proportion of participants who self-manage all or part of their plan has remained relatively stable, with a slight decrease from 30% to 29%. The NDIA continues to support participants to decide whether self-management is right for them, including recently releasing an updated guide to self-management. The guide explains the benefits of self-management, roles and responsibilities and how to self-manage effectively.

There have also been changes in payments over the past 2 years across these 3 plan management types:

- **Self-managed** payments remained between **12%** and **13%**
- Payments managed by a **plan manager** increased from **44%** to **56%**
- **Agency-managed** payments decreased from **44%** to **32%**.

In the December 2023 quarter, of the \$10.2 billion in payments, \$1.2 billion was self-managed (12%), \$5.7 billion was managed by a plan manager (56%), and \$3.3 billion was Agency-managed (32%).<sup>64</sup>

The proportion of plan management types differs by support category. In the December 2023 quarter:

- Payments for **participants in SIL receiving core daily activities support** were **\$2.6 billion**. Of this, \$2 million was self-managed (**less than 1%**), \$629 million was managed by a plan manager (**24%**), and \$2.0 billion was Agency-managed (**76%**).
- Payments for **participants not in SIL receiving core daily activities support** were **\$2.6 billion**. Of this, \$379 million was self-managed (**14%**), \$1.9 billion was managed by a plan manager (**72%**), and \$353 million was Agency-managed (**13%**).
- Payments for **participants receiving core social participation support** were **\$2.3 billion**. Of this, \$204 million was self-managed (**9%**), \$1.8 billion was managed by a plan manager (**75%**), and \$373 million was Agency-managed (**16%**).
- Payments for **participants receiving capacity building daily activities support (therapy supports)** were **\$1.3 billion**. Of this, \$375 million was self-managed (**29%**), \$831 million was managed by a plan manager (**64%**), and \$89 million was Agency-managed (**7%**).

<sup>61</sup> The number does not include plan managers who received only payment for plan management fees.

<sup>62</sup> The number includes plan managers who are providing Agency-managed supports.

<sup>63</sup> The number is understated as provider information for self-managed participants is provided on a voluntary basis. In the December 2023 quarter, provider information was provided for 15% of all self-managed payment transactions.

<sup>64</sup> Includes cash and in-kind payments.

## 4.3 Plan managers

The number of plan managers in the Scheme continues to grow as more participants choose to utilise them.

### Provider types

Participants supported by plan managers can use registered or unregistered providers. Unregistered providers are used for "general" support items which are not necessarily disability specific and can be considered more readily available. For the 12 months to 31 December 2023, an unregistered provider was used less frequently and had a higher proportion of one-off payments (i.e. the unregistered provider was only used once). On average the frequency of one-off payments was approximately 3 times lower for registered providers.

### Payment characteristics

In the December 2023 quarter, 179,172 providers supported plan-managed participants out of which 12,496 were registered at some point during the quarter.<sup>65</sup>

Payments to plan managers were \$5.7 billion in the December 2023 quarter. Of this \$5.7 billion, \$140 million was for the plan management services, and the remainder of \$5.6 billion was for plan managers to pay service providers on behalf of participants.

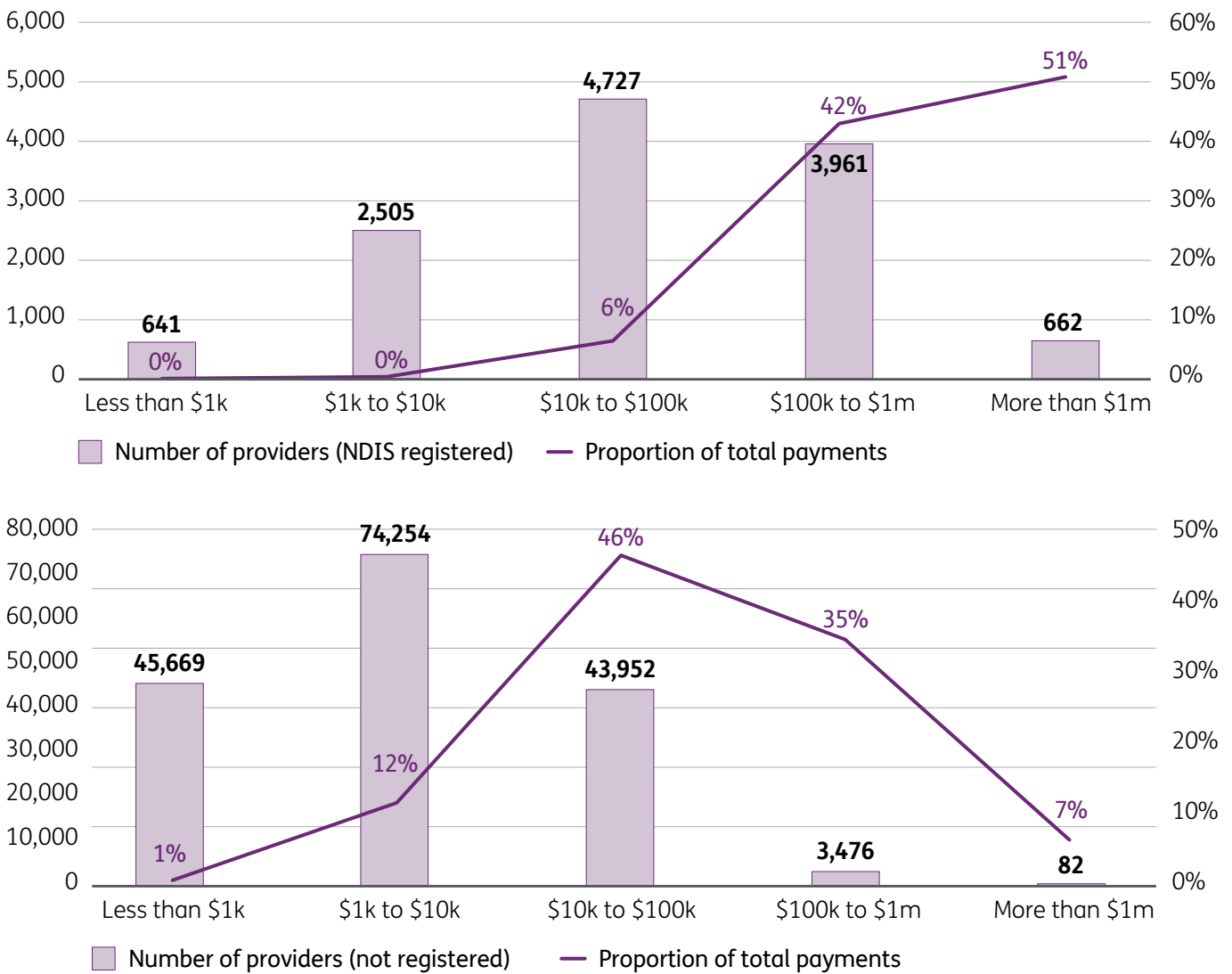
Participants supported by plan managers can use registered or unregistered providers. Across all plan managers, 55% of the \$5.6 billion total plan managed payments in the December 2023 quarter (not including plan management fees) were paid to registered providers, 44% of plan-managed payments were paid to unregistered providers and 1% of plan-managed payments were paid to providers with unknown registration.

Although only 44% of plan-managed payments went to unregistered providers, the market of unregistered providers is large, which means there are many providers receiving smaller total payments. Although only 7% of providers paid through plan managers are NDIS registered providers, they represent 55% of total payments in the quarter. Further, 37% of NDIS registered providers received more than \$100,000 in NDIS funding for the quarter, compared to only 2% of unregistered providers receiving more than \$100,000 in funding.

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<sup>65</sup> Registration status of a provider may move between registered and unregistered over the quarter.

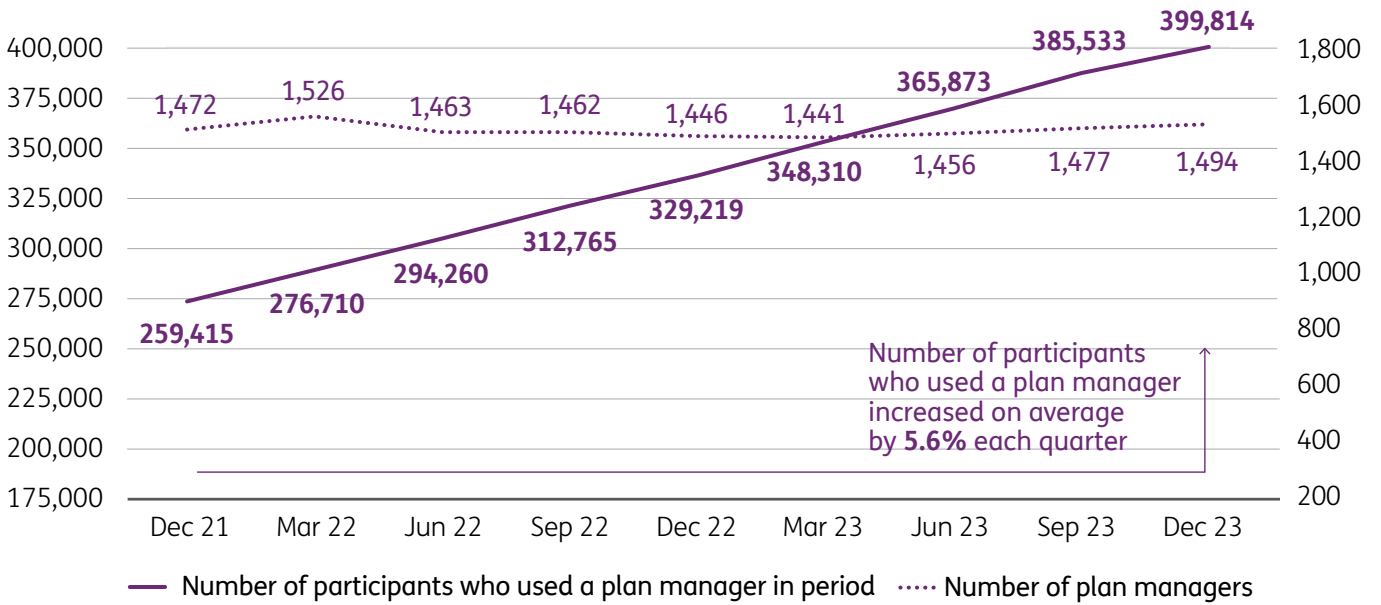
Figure 30: Number of providers servicing participants through a plan manager and proportion of total payments<sup>66</sup> in the quarter by payment band – NDIS registered (top) vs not registered (bottom)<sup>67</sup>



Over the past 9 quarters, the number of plan managers has remained very similar, increasing marginally from 1,472<sup>68</sup> at December 2021 to 1,494 at December 2023. Over the same period, the number of participants being supported by plan managers increased from 259,415 to 399,814 – a quarterly average increase of 5.6%. This indicates that while new plan managers have entered the market, the increase in plan managers was not as large as the increase in participants and that many plan managers have expanded as the ratio of participants to providers has increased.

66 \$49 million of payments made to providers with “unknown” registration status have not been included in this chart.  
 67 Registration status is determined as at the posting date of payment. Some providers may be counted more than once if they changed registration status during the quarter.  
 68 The historical number of plan managers does not take into account any revisions in their registration status.

Figure 31: Participants and providers with a plan manager by quarter – all participants<sup>69</sup>



#### 4.4 Supported Independent Living

\$3.4 billion of SIL supports was provided in the December 2023 quarter.

Total payments to participants in SIL have increased by 20% annually over the last 3 years, from \$7.5 billion to \$12.9 billion. The number of participants has also increased from 24,752 on 31 December 2020 to 33,581 on 31 December 2023. A more consistent and comprehensive participant centric decision-making process has moderated the growth in the number of SIL participants in the past 2 quarters.

The average payment per participant for SIL supports has also increased and comprises a large component of the total average payment for participants in SIL (noting that participants in SIL also receive other supports, such as core support for community participation, employment, and capacity building). The average payment per participant for SIL supports (core daily activities) has increased by 7% annually over the last 3 years.

As part of the 2023–24 Australian Government Budget commitment to improve the Scheme, the NDIA will simplify and improve information for participants about the home and living process and the evidence needed to support consistent decision making.

The NDIA will also stand up a specialist home and living team of highly skilled planners with the knowledge and expertise to assess requests from participants.

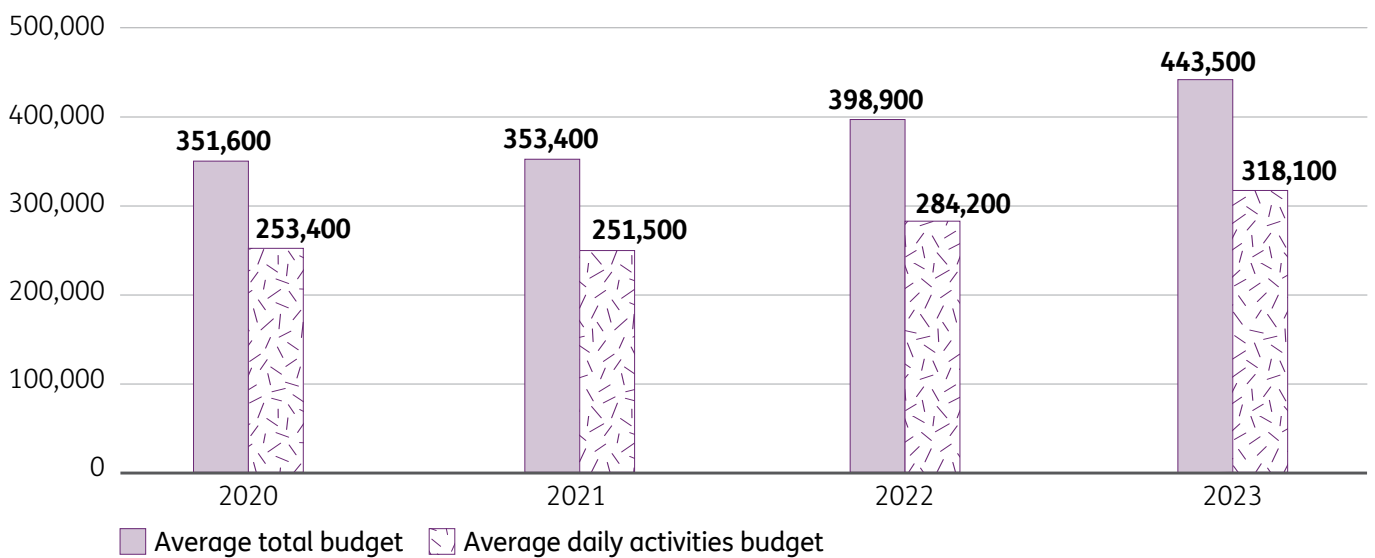
69 The historical number of plan managers does not take into account any revisions in their registration status.

Figure 32: Number of participants and payments for years ending 31 December – participants in SIL<sup>70</sup>

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% increase (per annum)
Active participants	22,277	24,752	25,954	29,812	33,581	11%
Total payments (\$m)		7,460	8,230	9,869	12,931	20%
Average payment (\$)		317,300	324,600	357,300	405,400	9%
Total payments – core daily activities (\$m)		6,045	6,497	7,688	9,865	18%
Average payment – core daily activities (\$)		257,100	256,300	275,700	311,200	7%

In addition to payments, average plan budgets for participants in SIL have also increased over time, including the component of the plan budget for SIL supports (core support for daily activities). Specifically, there was an 8% per annum (or 26% overall) increase in both average plan budgets, and the average daily activities component of plan budgets over the 3 years to 31 December 2023.

Figure 33: Average plan budgets over time for years ending 31 December – participants in SIL (\$)



<sup>70</sup> Comparison between 2019 and 2020 is not entirely on a like for like basis due to a change in basis for identifying participants in SIL since July 2020. Further refinement to the logic of identifying participants in SIL was applied in the September 2023 quarter.

## 4.5 Specialist Disability Accommodation

The total number of enrolled Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) dwellings continues to increase.

The number of active participants with SDA supports has increased by 14% annually over the last 3 years, reaching 23,058 as at 31 December 2023. The average plan budgets for SDA supports have also increased by around 15% per annum, leading to an increase in total SDA supports in participant plans by around 30% per annum, from \$198 million as at 31 December 2020 to \$440 million as at 31 December 2023.

Total SDA payments have increased by 29% annually over the last 3 years, from \$124 million to \$267 million.<sup>71</sup> The average SDA payments per participant have also increased, by 12% per annum.

The NDIS forms one part of the disability ecosystem, supporting Australians and their families to ensure those living with disability can lead a fulfilling life. The NDIS was designed to complement, not replace, other mainstream services for which the states and territories are responsible, including housing.

Figure 34: Number of participants, plan budgets and payments for years ending 31 December – participants with SDA supports

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	% increase (per annum)
Active participants with SDA funding	15,667	16,972	22,069	23,058	14%
Total SDA supports (\$m)	198	231	334	440	30%
Average SDA supports (\$)	12,666	13,617	15,120	19,074	15%
Total SDA payments (\$m)	124	158	214	267	29%
Average SDA payments (\$)	8,429	9,688	10,953	11,827	12%

The total number of enrolled SDA dwellings at 31 December 2023 was 8,590, up by 20% annually over the last 3 years, and by 1,139 dwellings (15%), compared to as at 31 December 2022. This increase was observed across most design categories. The largest increase was for dwellings of the Robust category (42%, 243 dwellings) and the High Physical Support design category (37%, 836 dwellings). All states and territories saw increases in enrolled dwellings.

As at 31 December 2023, there were 8,961 active participants with SDA funding who do not have evidence<sup>72</sup> of SDA funding in use. Reasons why participants may not have SDA funding in use include:

- SDA newly included in plan
- not yet ready to move from current accommodation
- still exploring options or awaiting to move when vacancy available
- awaiting the completion of (an identified) new build SDA dwelling
- yet to locate a suitable SDA dwelling – by location or SDA type/category.

71 To deal with an accumulated backlog of payments, the NDIA has made off-system payments to providers directly. The \$214 million total SDA payments made in the year ending on 31 December 2022 includes off-system payments of \$10.5 million made in June 2022.

72 Evidence of SDA funding in use is estimated based on SDA payments, SDA service bookings and address matching to an enrolled SDA dwelling. Future enhancements to the new computer system will allow for better tracking and an ability to better understand why participants may not be using SDA funding.

## 4.6 Choice and control, utilisation and market concentration

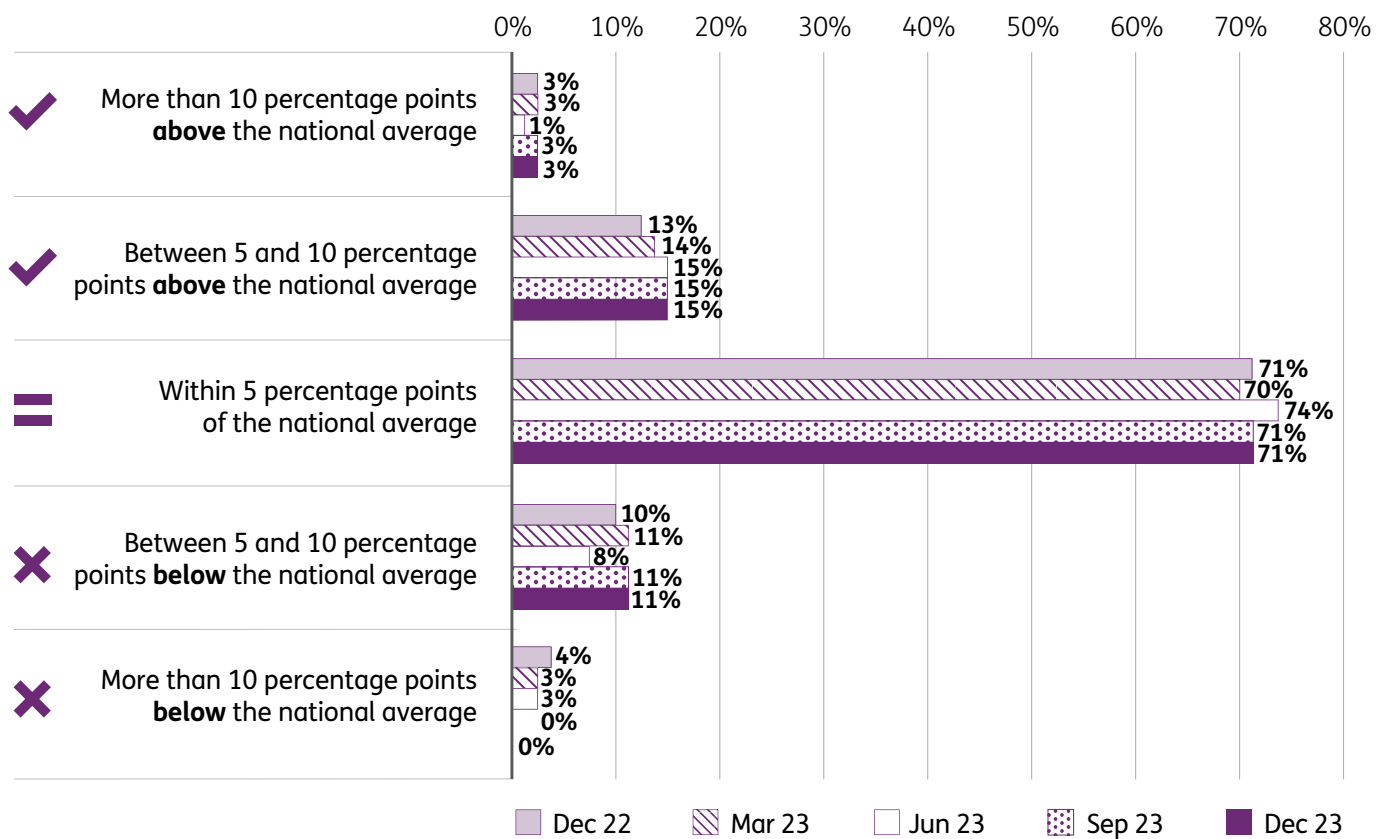
Comprehensive data on market effectiveness is being used to improve participant outcomes across all regions through identifying thin markets.

Between December 2022 and December 2023, the choice and control and market concentration performance metrics have improved whilst the utilisation metric has shown slight deterioration.

### Choice and control

Overall, 57 of the 80 service districts (71%) in the analysis were within 5 percentage points of the national average, 2 service districts (3%) were more than 10 percentage points above the national average, and no service district was more than 10 percentage points below the national average. The percentage of service districts within 5 percentage points of the national average remained at 71%.

Figure 35: Choice and control – distribution of service districts – gap to benchmark – trend



### Utilisation

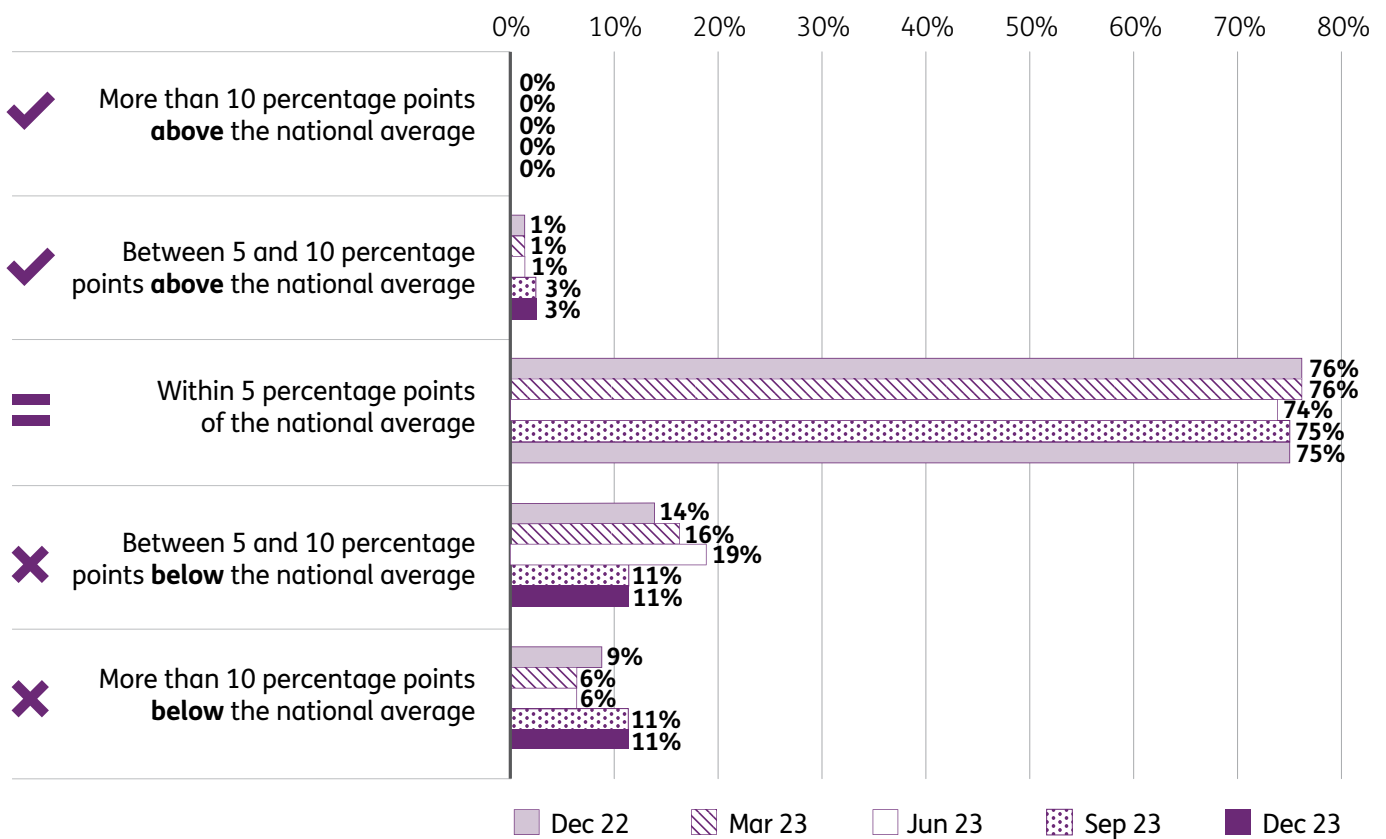
Overall, 60 of the 80 service districts (75%) in the analysis are within 5 percentage points of the national average<sup>73</sup>, no service district was more than 10 percentage points above the national average, and 9 service districts (11%) were more than 10 percentage points below the national average. There are 9 service districts between 5 and 10 percentage points below the national average.

The number of service districts more than 10 percentage points below the national average remained stable since last quarter.

Over the last year, the number of service districts more than 10 percentage points below the national average has increased from 7 (9%) to 9 (11%). The number of service districts within 5 percentage points of the national average has remained relatively stable.

The number of service districts between 5 and 10 percentage points below the national average has decreased marginally from 11 (14%) to 9 (11%) over the last year.

Figure 36: Utilisation – distribution of service districts – gap to benchmark – trend



73 Utilisation has been adjusted to account for the differences in the proportion of participants in each service district receiving SIL, along with the time participants have been in the Scheme.



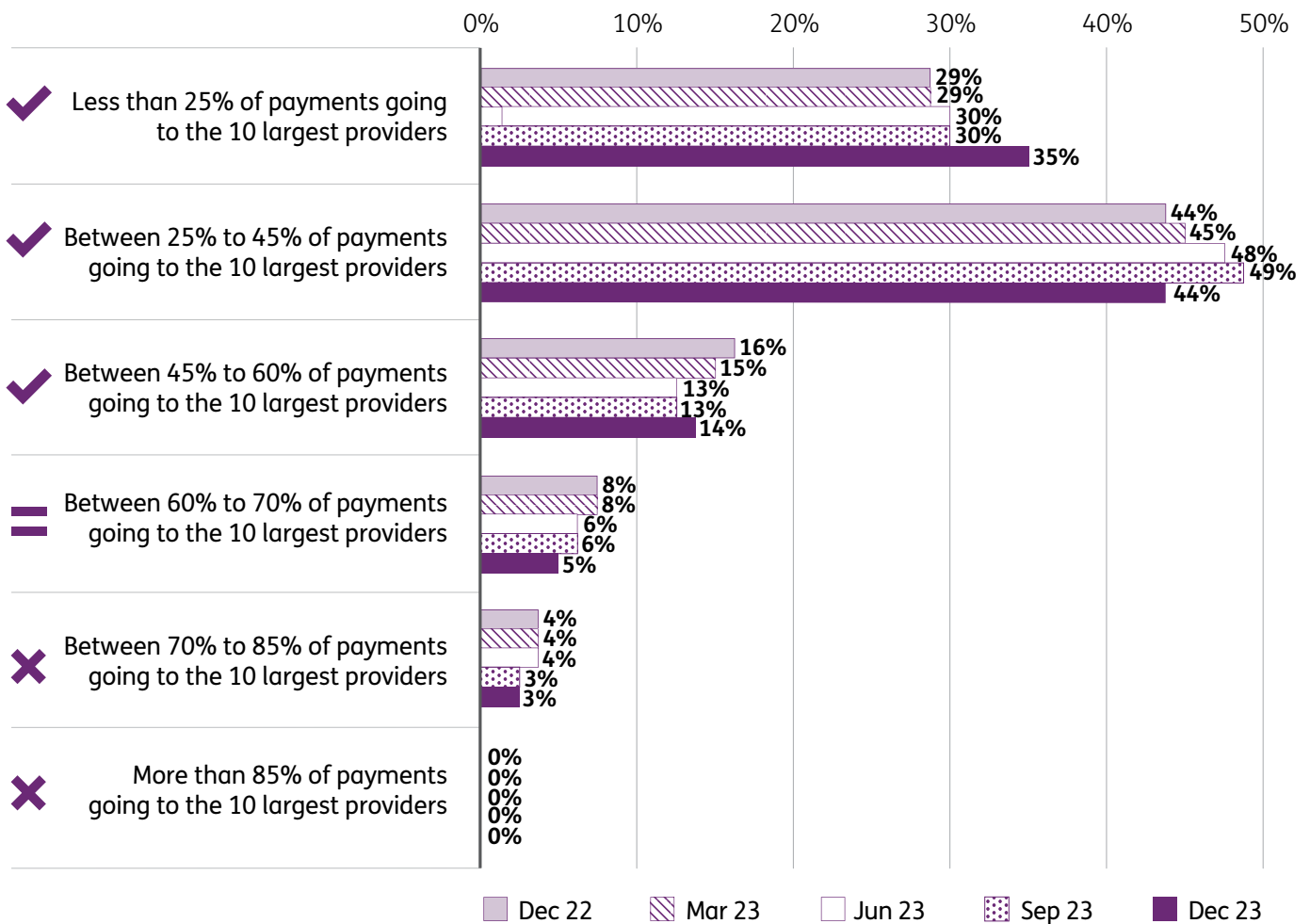
**Market concentration**

As at 31 December 2023, for the 6 month period to 30 September 2023, 6% of NDIS payments across Australia were paid to the 10 largest service providers, excluding providers paid through self-managed payments.

The analysis below considers payments to providers in the 6 month period to 30 September 2023. There are 2 service districts where 70% or more of payments go to the 10 largest providers within the service district (3%) and 63 service districts where less than 45% of payments went to the 10 largest providers within the service district (79%).

Over the past year, the number of service districts where 60% or more of payments go to the 10 largest providers has decreased, and simultaneously the number of service districts where less than 45% of payments went to the 10 largest providers has increased. The number of service districts where between 60% to 85% of payments go to the 10 largest providers has decreased from 9 (11%) to 6 (8%). Further, as at December 2023, there was no service district where the 10 largest providers received more than 85% of payments.

Figure 37: Market concentration – distribution of service districts by percentage of payments going to the 10 largest providers – trend



## 4.7 COVID-19 assistance

### The NDIA continues to give COVID-19 support.

The NDIA works with the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Department of Health and Aged Care and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NQSC) to maintain a robust COVID-19 response to provide uninterrupted supports and services for NDIS participants and NDIS providers. The NDIA anticipates continued health advice to be shared by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation throughout 2024 and will provide information about access to vaccination services for NDIS participants, their families and carers, and NDIS providers.

On 21 September 2023, the Australian Government announced the COVID-19 response inquiry, chaired by Robyn Kruk AO, a former NDIA Board Member. The NDIA is working with DSS to provide the inquiry with current and historical information about the experiences of the NDIA, NDIS participants, and NDIS providers during the pandemic. The inquiry has called for information about lessons learned to support Australia's preparedness for future pandemics, including improving supports and services for people with disability.

## 4.8 Market stewardship activities

### The NDIA continues to support the developing NDIS market including developing home and living options and partnering with the sector to improve quality and outcomes of support coordination.<sup>74</sup>

#### SDA Pricing Review

Following the completion of the SDA Pricing Review 2022–2023, the NDIA is prioritising work to make adjustments to funding to reflect the SDA Pricing Review.

Adjustments are in progress for plans with SDA funding in place prior to 1 July 2023. In some instances, however, adjustments are taking longer than expected. These plans are currently being investigated further, and SDA providers will be able to claim any monies payable backdated to 1 July 2023 once the adjustments are complete.

For participants' plans created post 1 July 2023 that include an SDA component, the new SDA funding is already being applied.

A roadmap for the implementation of the remaining SDA Pricing Review recommendations has been developed with progress being made on the first stage of several of the recommendations including system changes required to enable the automatic annual indexation of SDA amounts from 1 July 2024, working with the Australian Building Codes Board in relation to the National Construction Code, planning for a census of SDA dwellings, and the scoping of initial requirements to commence a review of the SDA Design Standard.

74 <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/market-monitoring#specialist-disability-accommodation-sda-quarterly-report>

### Home and living demonstration projects

Implementation is underway following the NDIA's announcement of the second round of home and living demonstration projects in October 2023. The 4 grant-funded projects are testing innovative ways of empowering NDIS participants to explore and understand their home and living possibilities. The initial implementation focus is co-design with participants.

The following 4 organisations were awarded the grants:

- Summer Foundation – \$174,000 over 1 year
- Self-Advocacy Sydney Incorporated – \$280,000 over 2 years
- VALID Inc – \$358,000 over 2 years
- University of Melbourne – \$206,000 over 2 years.

The projects commenced in the December 2023 quarter and will run for up to 2 years with more than 900 participants expected to be involved across Australia.

## 4.9 NDIS pricing

Work on the 2023–24 Annual Pricing Review (APR) is underway.

The NDIA is continuing work on the 2023–24 APR and has produced a participant-focused consultation paper. The consultation paper was co-designed with the NDIS Participant Reference Group and the Office of the Participant Advocate branch to engage with NDIS participants and get feedback on the effectiveness of the current price structure for disability supports and services.

The 2023–24 APR Provider and Participant consultation papers are aimed to be released in mid-January.

These papers encourage written submissions from providers, participants, community, and government stakeholders.

The consultation findings and final recommendations will be published in the APR report in June 2024 following the Fair Work Commission's decision on minimum wage in mid-late June 2024.



## Marie finds new life purpose with improved mobility and independence

Marie is finding new meaning in surviving the road accident that took her fiancé's life and left Marie with life-changing disabilities.

Marie is a participant advisor to South Australian medical and academic experts studying the benefits of exercising underwater for people with brain and spinal injuries.

'I just wish I discovered this a long time ago, it could have changed my life much sooner,' Marie says.

After the accident, Marie, not yet 27, spent 2 years in hospital and rehabilitation. When she returned home, she was not only dealing with the trauma of losing her partner.

Marie had a significant brain injury, major leg and spinal injuries and needed a wheelchair to move around, and was living with debilitating pain and fatigue. Marie's disabilities affected her mobility, her memory, and her mental health.

For many years, Marie was isolated and struggled to leave her home. But about 5 years ago, Marie joined the NDIS and started receiving supports, including therapies to help improve her mobility. Marie's NDIS funding included access to support workers to help her with daily tasks and getting out into her community again.

'I developed a particularly strong bond with my support worker, Lorraine,' Marie says. 'I know I can rely on her and that she's there for me and will support me in whatever I do. It gives me great peace of mind.'

About 18 months ago, with Lorraine's support, Marie tried something new – exercising underwater. Using scuba equipment, Marie can move freely in ways she never could on land.

'It's an incredible feeling of freedom,' Marie says. 'Underwater is such a soothing place, physically and emotionally. It gives me a sense of calm I can't find anywhere else.'

Marie now does immersion therapy twice a week with registered NDIS provider Determined2 at the Adelaide Aquatic Centre.

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**'This has been the biggest change and improvement for me, it has helped me in so many ways, physically, mentally and socially,' Marie, now 40, says.**

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For Marie, less pain and improved mobility mean more confidence and independence, and Marie is out in her community and actively enjoying her life again.

'My life has changed dramatically because of the supports I have through the NDIS and that gives me a great sense of security. I'm feeling positive about the future.'

## Section 5: Financial sustainability



A financially sustainable Scheme achieves outcomes for participants across their lifetimes and is affordable now and into the future.

### 5.1 Participants and cost projections

On 8 December 2023, the NDIA Board released the Annual Financial Sustainability Report (AFSR), and the Peer Review Report.

The NDIA Board released the 30 June 2023 AFSR on 8 December 2023. The AFSR is prepared by the Scheme Actuary, and provides an assessment of the financial sustainability of the NDIS, as is required under the NDIS Act (Section 180B). It is produced using data at 30 June each year and a summary of each year's AFSR is included in the NDIA Annual Report. The AFSR was independently peer reviewed by the Australian Government Actuary.<sup>75</sup> A copy of this report was also released on 8 December 2023.

Based on data at 31 December 2022, Scheme projections were undertaken and these were used as the basis for the 2023–24 Budget. The projections in the 2022–23 AFSR include allowances for the expected impact of the Budget measures announced to lift the NDIA's capability, capacity, and systems to better support participants. They do not allow for the impact of any future changes to the Scheme as a result of the recommendations made by the NDIS Independent Review Panel.

The AFSR projects that:

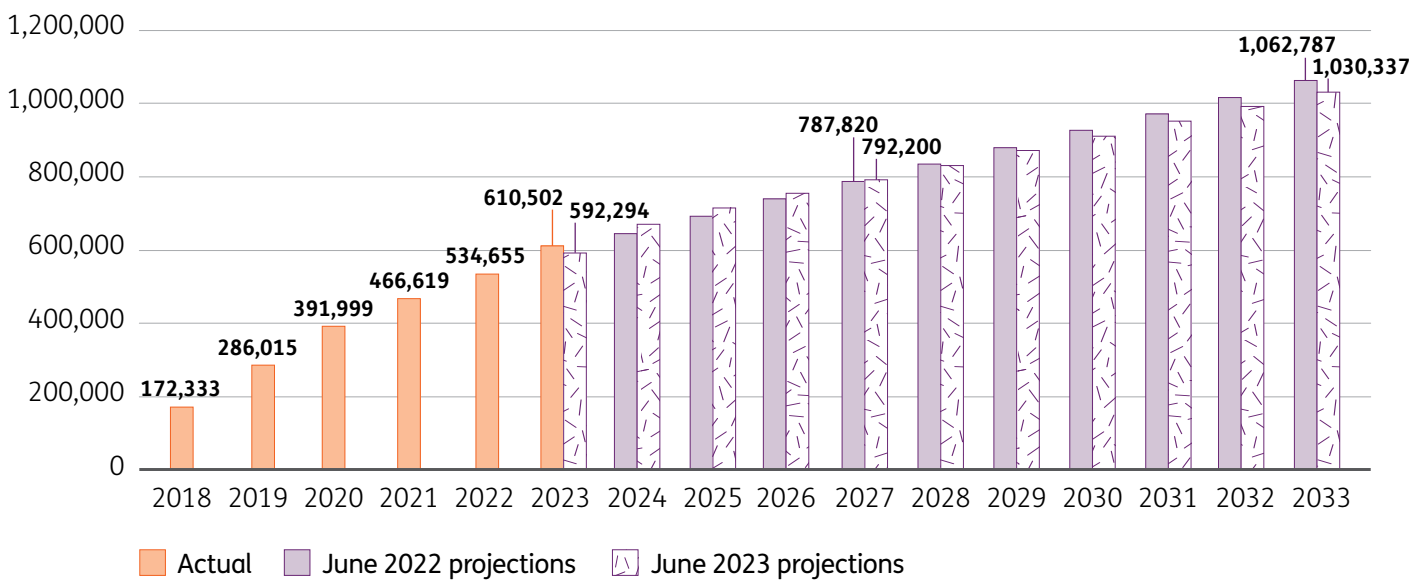
- There will be 792,200 participants in the Scheme at the end of June 2027 (of which 744,040 are under the age of 65 years), and 1,030,337 at the end of June 2033. The June 2023 projections indicate a higher rate of growth in projected participant numbers until 30 June 2027, compared to the June 2022 projections, and a lower rate of growth thereafter.
- The AFSR shows the growth rate of the NDIS is starting to stabilise. In the longer term, projections are \$1.8 billion lower in 2032–33, compared to December 2022. Stabilising of growth is being achieved through considered and targeted reforms – delivered in partnership with people with disability and the disability community.
- Changes in legislative and policy settings arising from NDIS Review recommendations are anticipated to lead to further moderation in Scheme growth relative to those shown in the AFSR from 2026–27 onwards, to achieve the target set by National Cabinet, which is consistent with the 2023 Intergenerational Report.

<sup>75</sup> The Australian Government Actuary currently is the Peer Review Actuary as per the NDIS Act (Section 180D).

- The NDIA has worked closely with participants and the wider disability community to deliver an operational reform program to start to reshape the NDIS. This includes the Government’s \$720 million investment in the NDIA with a focus on a better, more consistent, more equitable experience for participants. The \$720 million of funding in this measure will support the NDIA to improve the administration of the Scheme, which will help reduce additional growth in Scheme expenses by \$15.3 billion, moderating additional growth to \$1.9 billion over 4 years from 2023–24.

These measures are aimed to support participant outcomes and the effective and sustainable operation of the Scheme.

Figure 38: Actual and projected participants as at 30 June (June 2023 and June 2022 projections)



Total Scheme expenses are estimated to be \$41.4 billion in 2023–24, growing to \$55.2 billion in 2026–27, and \$92.3 billion in 2032–33.

Figure 39: Projected Scheme expenses on an accrual basis

Scheme expenses (\$m)	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27	2032–33
Scheme expenses (aged 0 to 64 years)	37,635	41,678	45,133	48,553	78,865
Scheme expenses (aged 65 years and over)	3,725	4,698	5,655	6,655	13,476
<b>Total Scheme expenses</b>	<b>41,360</b>	<b>46,376</b>	<b>50,788</b>	<b>55,207</b>	<b>92,341</b>
<b>Total Scheme expenses (% of GDP)</b>	<b>1.61%</b>	<b>1.76%</b>	<b>1.83%</b>	<b>1.89%</b>	<b>2.33%</b>

More detail is available in the reports located on the NDIS website:

[Annual Financial Sustainability Report<sup>76</sup>](#) – published 8 December 2023

[Independent Actuary Peer Review Report<sup>77</sup>](#) – published 8 December 2023

It is important to recognise that the projected Scheme expenses are shown in nominal terms, i.e. that future dollars of estimated Scheme expenses include the effects of inflation over time. This impact of inflation increases over the longer term and so is particularly significant for the result in 2032-33. Scheme expenses are estimated to be 1.61% of GDP in 2023-24, increasing to 2.33% in 2032-33. In considering longer-term projections of Scheme costs, it is recommended that users refer to costs as a percentage of GDP rather than nominal dollar figures as these provide a more meaningful measure of Scheme expenses.

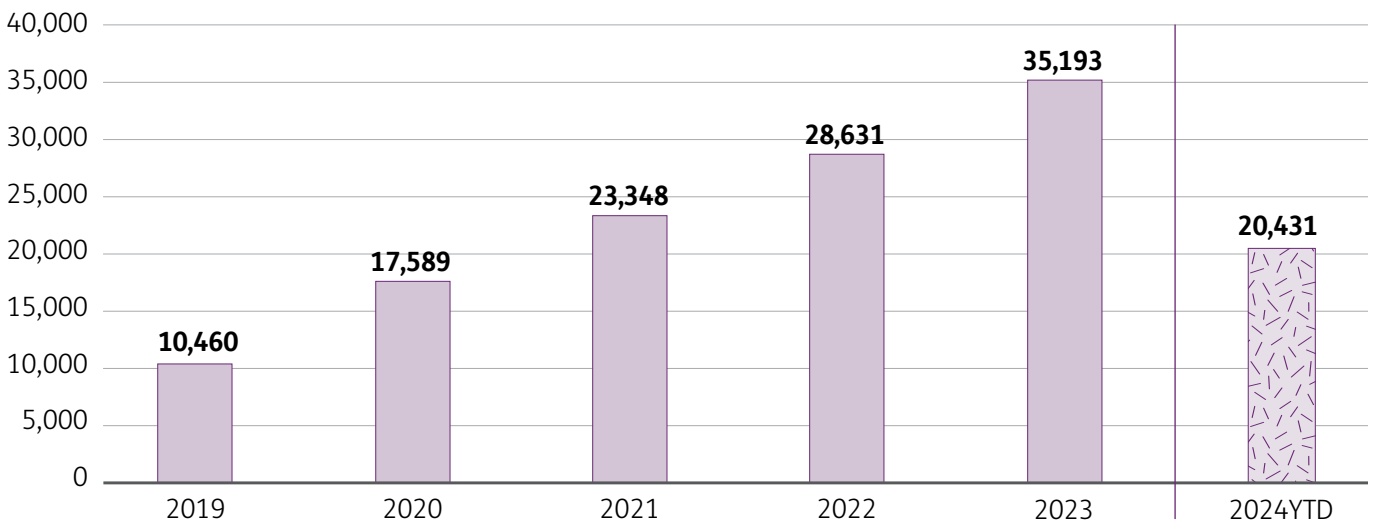
## 5.2 Total payments

**Total Scheme payments<sup>78</sup> continue to increase due to both increased participant numbers and higher average cost per participant.**

Total payments have increased over the last 4 years, from \$10.5 billion in the year to 30 June 2019 to \$35.2 billion in the year to 30 June 2023. The payments in the 6 months to 31 December 2023 were \$20.4 billion.<sup>79</sup>

The increasing number of participants benefitting from the Scheme contributes to the increase in payments.

Figure 40: Total payments (\$m) for financial years ending 30 June



<sup>76</sup> <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/annual-financial-sustainability-reports>

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Total Scheme costs are presented by financial year on an accrual basis, sourced from the NDIA Financial Accounts. The Scheme costs figure is made of total Scheme expenses, less Scheme grant payments, write-downs and write-offs.

<sup>79</sup> This compares to \$16.8 billion in the 6 months to 31 December 2022.

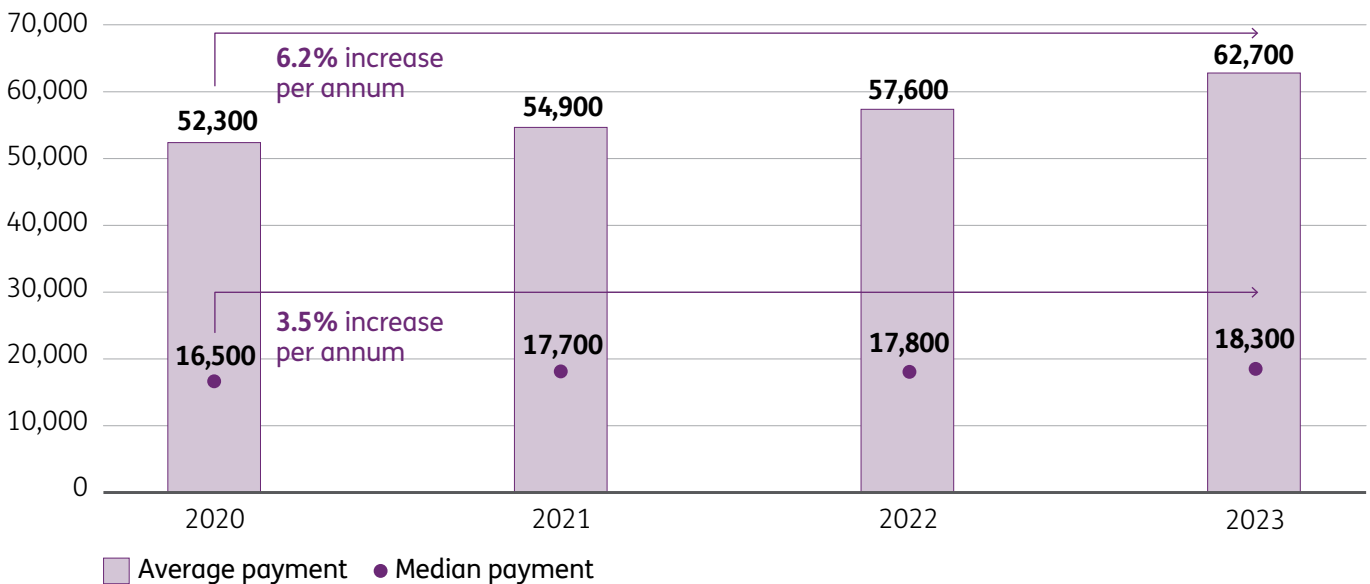
### 5.3 Average and median payment trends

Average and median payments per participant have increased by 6.2% and 3.5% per annum respectively over the last 3 years.

Both the average (mean) payment per participant and the median payment per participant provide useful information. In the NDIS, the average payment is much higher than the median payment because there is a skewed distribution with a small number of participants receiving very high cost supports, and a large number receiving low cost supports.

Trends in average and median payments per participant between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2023 indicate that average payments have increased by 6.2% per annum, and median payments have increased by 3.5% per annum.

Figure 41: Average and median payments for years ending 31 December



Trends in average and median payments are affected by changes in the profile of participants in the Scheme over time. Specifically, average payments are much higher for participants in SIL than those not in SIL, by a factor of 9 times. Average payments are also higher for adults compared with children, by a factor of almost 4 times. Over the past 4 years the proportion of participants younger than 15 has increased from 41% to 43% and the proportion of participants in SIL has decreased from 6.0% to 5.2%. The impact of this changing mix is to reduce the average and median payment, all else being equal.



## 5.4 Average plan budget trends

Average plan budgets have also increased over time for the same cohort of participants.

In addition to average payments increasing over time, average plan budgets have also increased over time, for both participants in SIL and not in SIL.

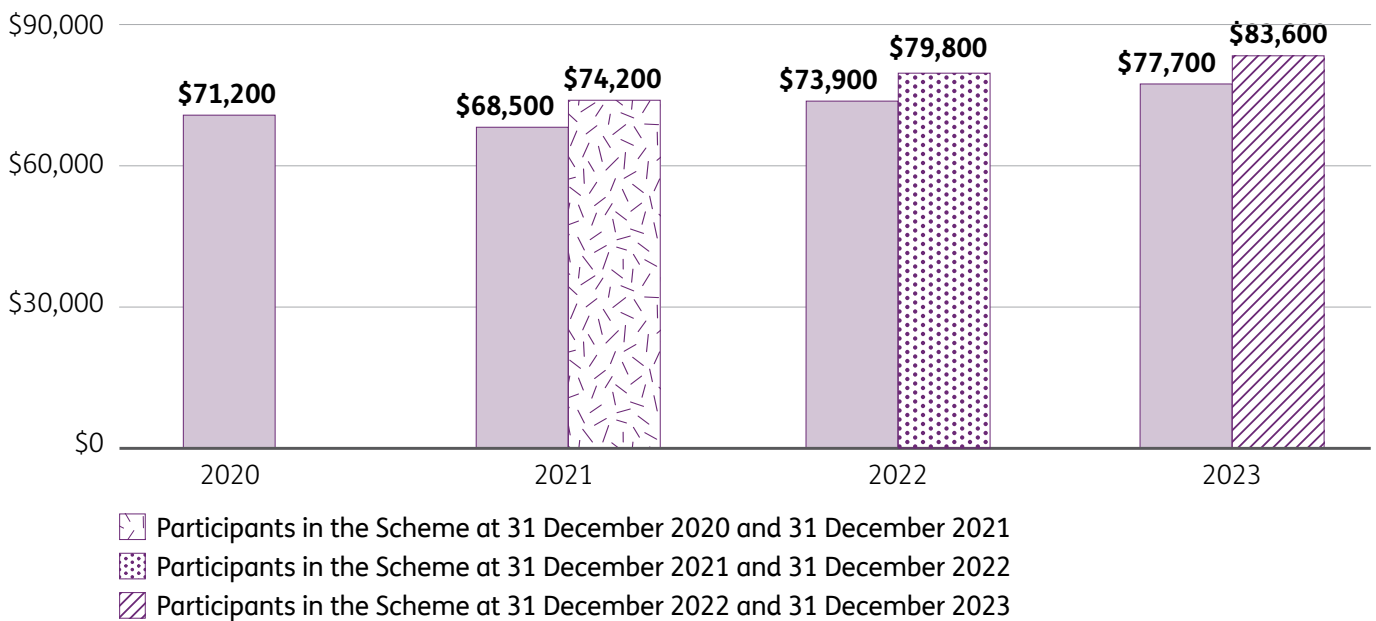
Specifically, over the 3 year period to 31 December 2023:

- average plan budgets have increased by **3.0%** per annum for all participants
- average plan budgets have increased by **8.0%** per annum for participants in SIL
- average plan budgets have increased by **1.5%** per annum for participants not in SIL.

The slight decrease in average annualised plan budgets in the year ending 31 December 2021 is due to the new participants entering the Scheme in the year to 31 December 2021 having, on average, lower plan budgets. This was driven by high proportions of participants younger than 18 entering the Scheme (as children have lower plan budget on average than adults).

Importantly, there was no reduction in the average plan budgets of participants continuing in the Scheme. For example, for these existing participants who were in the Scheme at 31 December 2020 and at 31 December 2021, the average plan budget increased from \$71,200 to \$74,200 (4.2%).

Figure 42: Average annualised plan budgets for years ending 31 December

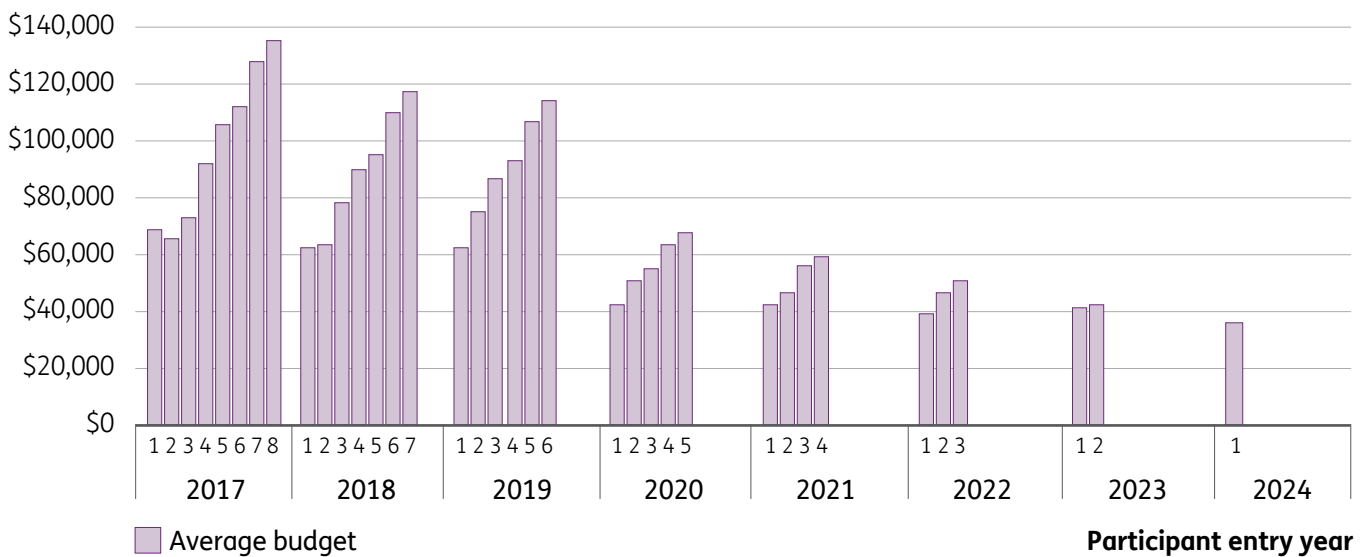


As the mix of participants has changed over time, understanding trends in average plan budgets for the same group of participants over time is important.

Figure 43 groups participants into cohorts based on the year participants entered the Scheme and shows the trend in average plan budgets based on the number of years they have been in the Scheme. For example, average plan budgets for participants who have entered the Scheme in the year ending 30 June 2018, increased from \$61,700 for their first year to \$116,600 for participants who have been in the Scheme for 7 years.

Average plan budgets for participants entering the Scheme in the year ending 30 June 2020 or later are lower relative to those entering the Scheme in earlier years. For example, those who entered the Scheme in 2020, had an average plan budget of \$41,700 for their first year, compared to a first year budget of \$68,300 for participants who entered in 2017. This reflects a changing mix of participants over time with the earlier years prioritising the transition of participants from existing State, Territory and Commonwealth government schemes into the NDIS while the recent years have seen a growing proportion of younger participants entering the Scheme with disabilities such as developmental delay.

Figure 43: Average plan budgets by years of entry ending 30 June, and number of years in Scheme



### Plan reassessments and plan budgets variations

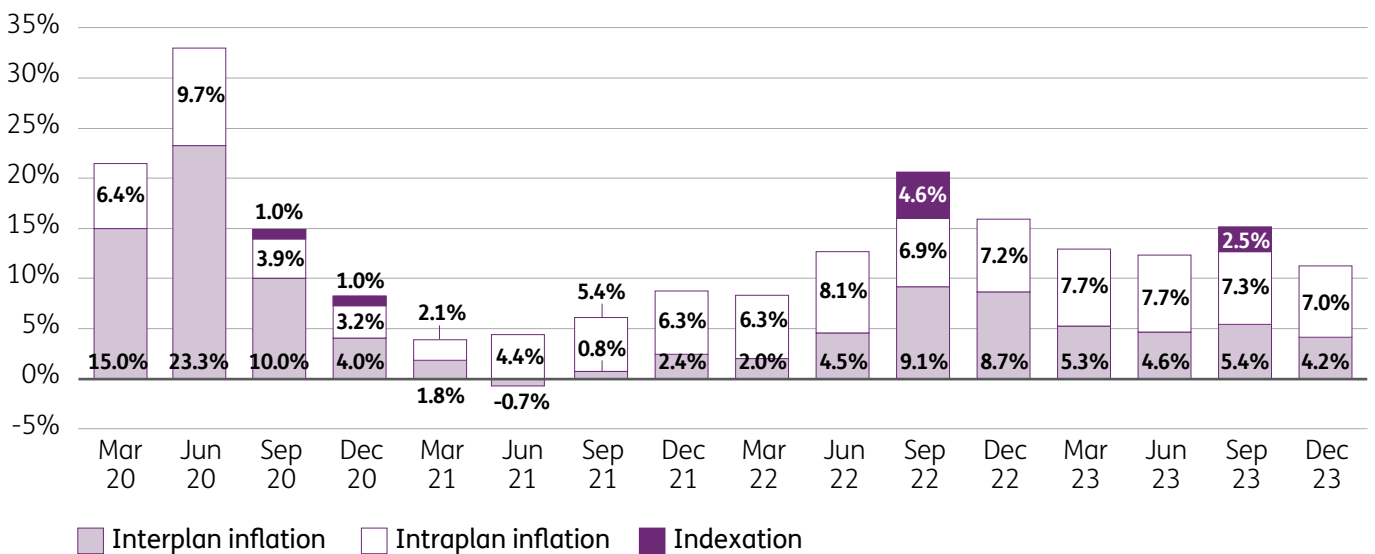
Plan reassessments result in plan budgets varying for a variety of reasons – for example, one-off capital items in one plan and not the next. Another example is investment in capacity building (such as behavioural supports) resulting in less need for core support over time. The NDIA has published an [operational guideline on plan reassessments](#)<sup>80</sup> which details the reasons a new plan could be different to a current plan.

### Plan inflation

In the December 2023 quarter, total plan inflation was 2.7% (11.2% per annum). Of the 11.2% per annum total plan inflation in the quarter, 4.2% was due to changes at plan reassessment, and 7.0% was due to changes occurring within a plan between reassessments.

The plan inflation of 11.2% per annum in December 2023 compares with plan inflation of 15.1% per annum in September 2023 (12.7% excluding indexation)<sup>81,82</sup>, and 12.3% per annum in June 2023. Inflation occurring at plan reassessment (interplan inflation) was 4.2% per annum which compares with 5.4% per annum in September 2023, and 4.6% per annum in June 2023. Inflation occurring within a plan, between reassessments, (intraplan inflation) was 7.0% per annum which compares with inflation of 7.3% per annum (excluding indexation) in September 2023 and 7.7% per annum in June 2023.

Figure 44: Annualised percentage change in plan budgets for active participants



80 <https://ourguidelines.ndis.gov.au/your-plan-menu/changing-your-plan>

81 The annualised calculation of inflation excludes the impact of plan indexation in July following the Annual Pricing Review. The impact of this indexation is then explicitly added to the annualised calculation which is a 2.5% one-off increase.

82 The Annual Pricing Review saw price limit increases from 1 July 2023. Unspent portions of plan budgets were increased in line with new price limit to maintain the purchasing power of remaining plans. Due to this, there has been a one-off increase in intraplan and total inflation during the month of July 2023.

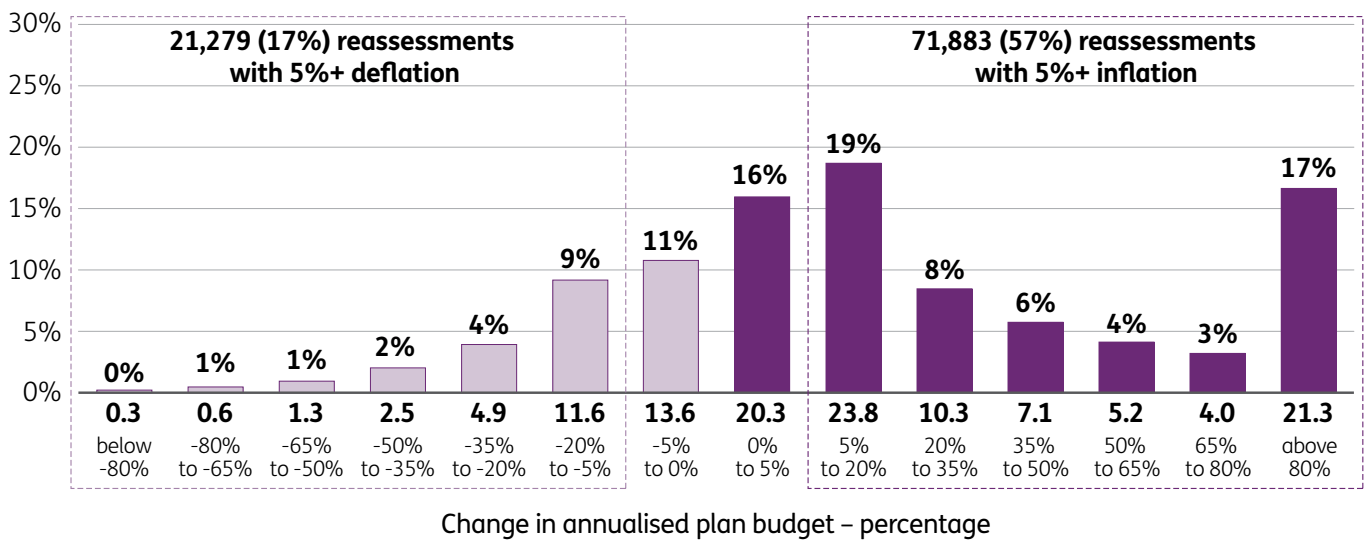
At the individual level, plan budgets can vary significantly. When looking at experience from 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023, taking account of total plan inflation, plans were more likely to increase rather than decrease.

During the 6 month period to 31 December 2023, 19% of active participants had a plan reassessment. Out of the plans reassessed:<sup>83</sup>

- **57%** of plans increased at reassessment by more than 5% (compared to 51% in the year to 30 June 2023)<sup>84</sup>
- **17%** decreased by more than 5% (compared to 19% in the year to 30 June 2023)
- **27%** remained within 5% (compared to 30% in the year to 30 June 2023).

17% of the plans reassessed increased by more than 80% during these 6 months, compared to 14% in the year to 30 June 2023.

Figure 45: Distribution of the percentage change in annualised plan budgets for plans reassessed between 1 July 2023 and 31 December 2023<sup>85</sup>



83 Numbers may add to more than 100% due to rounding.

84 The distribution at 30 June 2023 and 31 December 2023 are partially comparable given the difference in plan indexation applied during the September 2022 and September 2023 quarter.

85 The number of plan reassessments (in thousands) in each inflation percentage band is shown at the bottom of each bar in the chart. The corresponding percentage of plan reassessments in each band is shown at the top of each bar in the chart.

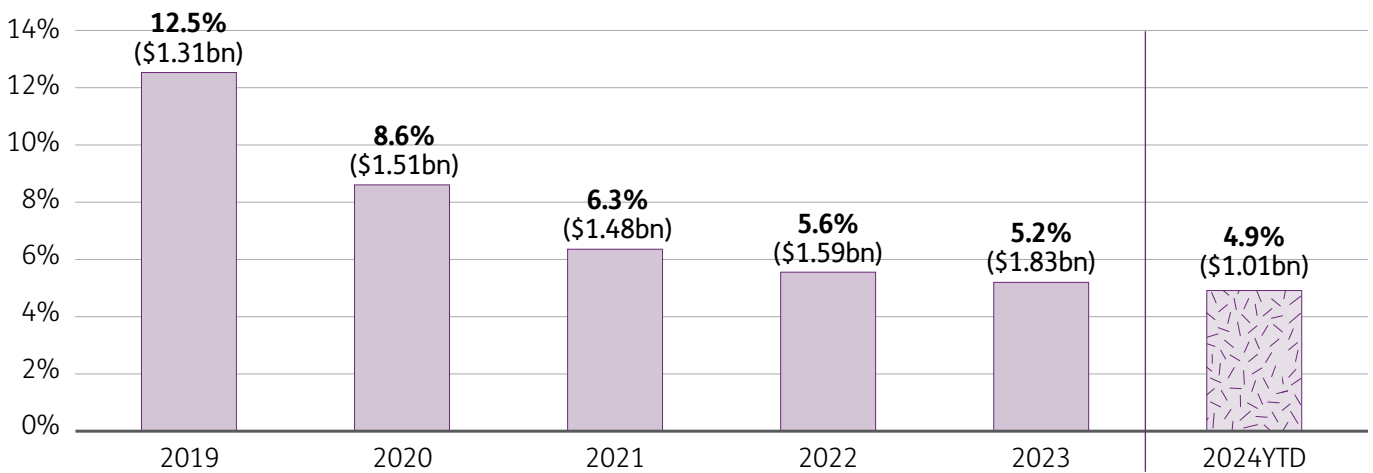
## 5.5 Operating expenses

Operating expenses per participant have reduced over the last 4 years.

In addition to the money spent through participant plans on supports for participants, the NDIA receives funding for its operating expenses, including paying staff wages. NDIA operating expenses have increased from \$1,310 million in 2018–19 to \$1,830 million in 2022–23.<sup>86</sup>

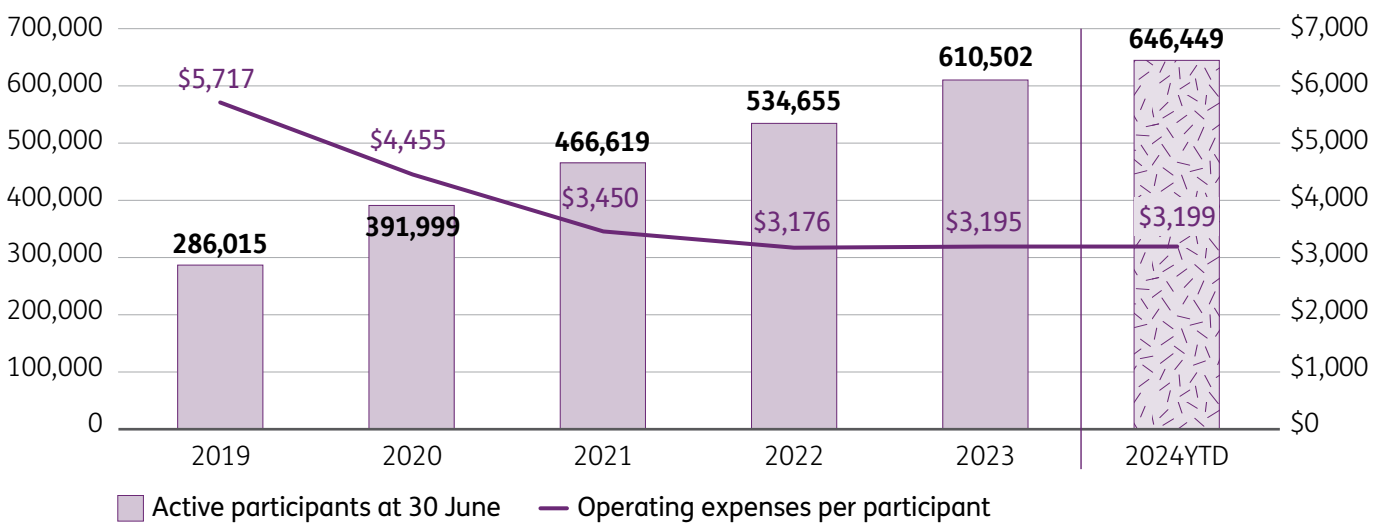
As a percentage of participant expenditure, operating expenses have decreased from 12.5% in 2018–19 to 5.2% in 2022–23. For the 6 months to 31 December 2023 the expense percentage decreased slightly to 4.9% due to seasonality in operating expenses. The Productivity Commission in their 2017 Study report<sup>87</sup> suggest a range of 7% to 10% as an appropriate benchmark for NDIA operating costs.

Figure 46: Operating expenses as a percentage of participant costs for years ending 30 June



The annualised operating cost per participant has reduced by 44% since 2018–19 from \$5,717 to \$3,195 in 2022–23. Annualised operating cost per participant for the 6 months to 31 December 2023 is similar to last financial year.

Figure 47: Operating expense per participant for years ending 30 June<sup>88,89</sup>



<sup>86</sup> Total operating expenses are based on an accrual basis.

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/ndis-costs#report>

<sup>88</sup> The annualised operating cost per participant for 2024YTD is expected to drop given the seasonality in operating expenses.

<sup>89</sup> The average number of participants is a simple average of the 2 periods (opening and closing) on active participants. Cost per participant uses these average participant numbers as the denominator.



## Jayelan launches a career teaching about non-verbal autism

In a few short years, Jayelan has gone from being underestimated at school, to presenting to international audiences and his world has opened up after years of being unable to express his thoughts verbally.

Jayelan, 19, is on the autism spectrum. He also has severe body and speech apraxia, affecting his ability to carry out physical movements required for speech. This means Jayelan can only speak a few words.

As a child, people assumed Jayelan could not understand them. But he understood everything.

During his early school years, Jayelan was misdiagnosed as having an intellectual disability and was educated at a level far below his capability. 'Life at school before I was 11 was horrible,' Jayelan says. 'Sitting in a class learning academic material that was far too easy for me was torture.'

When Jayelan was introduced to the letterboard, it was a turning point. 'Things were so much better when I started communicating on the letter board,' Jayelan says. 'It felt great to finally access the appropriate education level.'

Now he's defying early expectations and is emerging as an advocate for people living with autism.

Jayelan is achieving his career goals through youth employment support, funded through his NDIS plan.

Together, Jayelan's mother Aemy and his support worker, who was funded through Jayelan's NDIS youth employment support, guided Jayelan through the discovery phase of the customised employment approach. They matched Jayelan's capabilities and interests with his goal of becoming an advocate for people who live with autism.

Jayelan also has an employment mentor through Microenterprise Launchpad, funded through his NDIS employment support.

'The employment mentor is teaching me the language of advocacy,' Jayelan says. 'She also helps me with developing a business plan, teaches me how to present pre-prepared speeches, and how to liaise with event organisers.'

Jayelan recently travelled to University Malaysia Sabah, where he delivered his Silent World Of Autism presentation to the Sabah Autism Society.

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**'I hope that by sharing my story I was able to give hope to parents in Malaysia with non-verbal autistic kids,' Jayelan says.**

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## Section 6: Staff, advisory groups and the NDIS community



Participant and sector engagement activities continue to be a focus.

### 6.1 Workforce diversity, inclusion and engagement

The NDIA continues to work on enhancing the inclusion, diversity and engagement of its workforce.

As at 31 December 2023, the total NDIS workforce was 14,596 including 6,819 APS employees, 2,053 labour hire workers and contractors, and 5,724 people employed by the NDIS Partners in the Community and Contact Centre partners.

As at 31 December 2023, 9.8% (671) of APS employees identify as a Person with Disability in the NDIA's HR Information System. This represents 10.1% of the APS1–6 levels, 8.7% of the Executive Levels, and 9.8% of the SES workforce.

Each year, the NDIA participates in the APS Census. The survey captures attitude and opinion data on important issues such as wellbeing, innovation, leadership, learning and development, and engagement of the APS workforce. This year 5,763 people (81%) working at the NDIA completed the survey.

In this quarter, Localised Action Plans were developed and are actively being managed to further uplift employee sentiment. In November 2023, in line with APS Reform requirements, the NDIA published an Agency Action Plan on the NDIS website. This detailed 3 key focus areas:

1. Building an inclusive workplace culture
2. Focus on health, safety and wellbeing
3. Enablement by improving tools, resources and processes

The 3 focus areas are ongoing priorities for the NDIA. Census results show efforts over the last 12 months in these areas have led to improvements and should continue.

The NDIA continues to progress actions in the Disability Inclusion Plan (DIP) with a key highlight being the outcomes of the Employees with Disability Workplace Experience Deep Dive. The Deep Dive findings will inform prioritisation of actions under the DIP and other employee experience improvement projects. Findings were also shared with the NDIA Board and the NDIS Independent Advisory Council (IAC).

International Day of People with Disability was celebrated across the NDIA with a week long calendar of events and workshops. Our theme 'We're better together' highlighted that as a society, workplace, team, friendship group or family – we're better together. The sessions enabled the NDIA to reflect on how we can work towards a more inclusive and accessible workplace, and to celebrate the achievements and contribution of people living with disability.

The NDIA First Nations Employment and Inclusion Plan 2022–25 contains 22 actions. During this quarter the NDIA continued to acknowledge, promote and guide its staff on First Nations cultural events and significant celebrations, and undertook extensive consultation with First Nations staff on the design and development of NDIA-specific cultural capability training for NDIA staff. The NDIA continues to deliver an ‘Acknowledge This Workshop’. In this quarter, 111 staff completed this workshop, and 1,198 have completed since implementation in 2020.

The NDIA is establishing a dedicated First Nations group within the NDIA organisational structure. The new group includes the creation of new executive roles, including First Nations Deputy CEO and Branch Manager roles. The purpose of the First Nations group is to focus on improving outcomes and engagement of First Nations participants and reflects the NDIA’s commitment to fostering inclusion and diversity.

In October 2023, the NDIA supported approximately 70 First Nations staff to come together for a highly successful face to face 2-day conference, providing the opportunity for the voices of First Nations staff to be heard and to work collaboratively with the NDIA to address common issues, alongside senior leaders.

The NDIA has participated in taking candidates of Indigenous Entry Level Program participants since 2015. In this quarter, the NDIA commenced preparing for participation in the 2024 intake, with plans to support and increase cohort size from 2023 numbers. This assists in increasing the number of First Nations staff working at the NDIA and progressing towards the target of 5% of its workforce identifying as First Nations.

The NDIA is in the final stages of the development of its first CALD Inclusion Plan, a document that details how it will support CALD staff and increase CALD representation across the NDIA. This document will be published in 2024.

In this quarter, the NDIA rolled out rainbow signage across its standalone sites signaling its participation in ACON’s Welcome Here Project. This initiative provides members of the LGBTIQ+ community with visible signage indicating that the NDIA is an LGBTIQ+ safe and friendly workplace.

Work has continued for the NDIA to be assessed and attain bronze level accreditation in the Australian Workplace Equality Index. This is an organisational benchmarking tool that assists workplaces to assess their inclusive practices and policies with regards to LGBTIQ+ inclusion. This benchmarking tool is administered by Pride in Diversity, an LGBTIQ+ peak advocacy body.



## 6.2 Co-design and engagement

Co-design projects which are strengthening the NDIA's engagement process.

### Our approach to co-design

The NDIA understands the best way to improve the NDIS is to listen to people with lived experience of disability and first-hand experience of the NDIS.

All reforms to the NDIS will be developed in partnership with people with disability and the disability community.

This quarter, we continued to work with the disability community to build co-design and engagement capability.

### Co-design Advisory Group

The Co-design Advisory Group (CAG) met once during the last quarter, on 14 November 2023. CAG has continued to provide valuable input into the NDIA's co-design process. This quarter the CAG has continued to focus on an evaluation of the NDIA's co-design work to support our ongoing improvement when working in partnership with the disability community. CAG is meeting less frequently to enable a greater focus on the Reform for Outcomes co-design.

### Disability Representative and Carer Organisations (DRCO) forum

The DRCO Forum met on 23 November 2023, to discuss the way the forum will operate in 2024 and their priorities for the year ahead. The forum discussed the final NDIS Review report and the NDIA's approach to co-designing the reforms recommended by the NDIS Review. At this meeting they also received updates from the CEO, Scheme Actuary, and Chief Counsel on the NDIS dispute resolution process.

DRCO members met out of session this quarter to discuss the blended payments trial, and with the IAC to discuss co-design progress of the Reform for Outcomes initiatives.

### Information Gathering for Access and Planning (IGAP)

The IGAP project was established in 2021 following the direction from disability ministers to "co-design a new person-centred model that delivers consistency and equity in access and planning outcomes, consistent with legislative requirements for assessments as set out under the *NDIS Act*". In May 2023 the IGAP Steering Committee agreed to pause the IGAP project until the recommendations of the NDIS Review have been delivered. Once the Australian Government has considered the recommendations of the NDIS Review, implementation of reforms to the NDIS will be developed in partnership with people with disability and the disability community.

### Home and living

The NDIA co-designed a home and living framework with the disability community to support participants to have more choice and control over where they live, who they live with and how they are supported in their home. The NDIA has deferred release of the home and living framework until after the final reports of the DRC and the NDIS Independent Review, because the reports will consider key features of the kind of home and living supports available and how they are provided to participants of the NDIS. Following the Government's response to both the DRC and NDIS Review recommendations, the NDIA will consider how these reports impact the work to date, and what changes or further work are required.

Ahead of the release of these reports, the NDIA is progressing work on how we can improve the experience and outcomes for participants who receive SIL through the co-design program of work to design and implement measures from the 2023–24 Australian Government Budget. This considers what changes we can make now, particularly in regard to the NDIS Review and the DRC, to improve participant outcomes and experience. The home and living framework is also actively informing this work.

### **Participant safeguarding**

The Minister released the co-designed NDIA participant safeguarding policy and implementation plan on 10 April 2023. The Policy outlines the NDIA's commitment to support people with disability who engage with the NDIS to create or expand safeguards to improve their safety and minimise the risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The actions in the implementation plan will be rolled out over 5 years and will be responsive to the recommendations in the DRC's final report and the NDIS Review.

### **Supported decision making**

The Minister released the co-designed supported decision making policy and implementation plan on 4 May 2023. The policy and implementation plan will guide how to better support participants to make decisions in the NDIS and build the knowledge and skills of people with disability (and people who support them) to make decisions, where they need that support. The actions in the implementation plan will be rolled out over a number of years and will be responsive to the recommendations in the DRC's final report and the NDIS Review.

### **CALD strategy**

The NDIA is co-designing a new CALD strategy for 2024–2028 (the CALD strategy) and corresponding Action Plan. The CALD strategy and action plan will enable the NDIA to work to ensure that people with disability from CALD backgrounds and their families and carers, can access and use the NDIS. An external advisory group (EAG) has provided support, advice, and guidance in developing the CALD strategy and action plan. The EAG comprises representatives who work with and represent people with disabilities from CALD backgrounds.

Since September 2023, the NDIA has:

- Ensured that the CALD strategy and action plan reflect findings from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and from the NDIS Review.
- Sought endorsement of the CALD strategy and action plan from the EAG and NDIA Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). These documents have also been noted by the NDIA Board and the Minister.
- Continued developing a detailed plan to support the implementation of the CALD strategy over the coming years. The plan will outline the specific activities and resources required to deliver, report on, and monitor each of the actions in the CALD strategy and action plan.
- Continued preparation for the public release of the CALD strategy and action plan, which is planned for March 2024.

### **First Nations strategy**

The NDIA has committed to working with First Nations people with disability, participants, the broader First Nations disability community, families, carers, and sector stakeholders to co-design a new First Nations strategy. The new First Nations strategy will replace the 2017 inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement strategy.

Since September 2023, the NDIA has:

- Incorporated all feedback received from the First Nations Advisory Council (FNAC), IAC Equity and Inclusion Reference Group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group, and internal NDIA stakeholders, into an updated First Nations strategy stakeholder engagement plan
- Progressed mapping of First Nations stakeholder engagement activities that have recently occurred across the NDIA, to minimise stakeholder fatigue or duplication of engagement. Insights will inform next steps for public engagement to co-design the First Nations strategy.

### **Reform for Outcomes**

The 6 co-design working groups and implementation steering committee continue to meet regularly to progress co-design across the Reform for Outcomes program. Over the last quarter these groups have met a total of 27 times.

Along with the NDIA, co-design working group members include representatives from the IAC, DRCOs, NDIS participants and other experts. The implementation steering committee meets monthly to oversee the working groups, identifying risks, issues and crossover within the program initiatives.

### **Provider engagement**

The NDIA continues to engage with a broad cross section of providers through a variety of channels. Reflecting the importance of building strong relationships with the provider sector, the NDIA has dedicated senior personnel to leading provider engagement. This is supported by specialist NDIA provider engagement staff who conduct one on one strategic engagement with providers.

Additionally, the NDIA continued to deliver information sessions for providers about our new computer system. In this quarter, the NDIA ran 27 virtual information sessions for providers. The NDIA's Provider Advisory Group continued to meet regularly to provide advice to the NDIA on the implementation of the new computer system and processes.

### **Industry Chief Executive Forum**

The Industry Chief Executive Forum met on a number of occasions throughout this quarter. Meetings focussed on the ongoing role of the Industry Chief Executive Forum, the Forum's work plan for 2024 and explored member insights on key matters such as the final report of the NDIS Review.

### **Provider education**

The NDIA ran 8 key education sessions for new providers in this quarter including 'Working as a Provider' and 'Getting Paid as a Provider'. These sessions provide key information on working in the NDIS environment and provide a forum for providers to ask questions about working within the NDIS and engaging with the NDIA.

## 6.3 Valued input from the Independent Advisory Council

The IAC continues to provide valued advice to the NDIA Board and management.

The IAC continues to work with the NDIA and the NDIA Board to deliver advice to improve the NDIS. This quarter, the IAC has focused on establishing priorities for each of its reference groups in preparation for the release of the NDIS Review in December 2023, the introduction of the NDIA's new computer system, participants' experience with accessing SIL supports, and the report and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

The IAC met in November and December 2023. Representatives of peer-led sector organisations and child and family advocacy organisations were invited to present on their work at these meetings.

Each of the IAC's 4 reference groups met this quarter. The reference groups have also contributed to the NDIA's Reform for Outcomes co-design working groups.

More information about the IAC, including meeting bulletins, is available on the [IAC website](#)<sup>90</sup>.

## 6.4 Public data sharing and the latest release of information

The NDIA continues to release timely data and analysis to stakeholders.

Data about the Scheme is shared publicly to the [NDIS data website](#)<sup>91</sup> each quarter through interactive tools, download files, reports and analyses.

On 16 November 2023, the following data files were released:

- the [accompanying data supplements](#)<sup>92</sup> to the September 2023 Quarterly Report to disability ministers
- [datasets](#)<sup>93</sup> containing detailed data updates across participant, provider and market categories
- the latest [participant dashboards data](#)<sup>94</sup>. This release shares the September 2023 quarter data for 15 disability types in the NDIS.

On 6 December 2023, [explore data](#)<sup>95</sup>, an interactive visualisation tool, was updated with September 2023 quarter data on participant, provider and market demographics.

Several deep dive reports and analyses have also been released in previous quarters and are available on the [NDIS data website](#)<sup>96</sup>.

90 <https://www.ndis-iac.com.au/news>

91 <https://data.ndis.gov.au>

92 <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/quarterly-report-supplements>

93 <https://data.ndis.gov.au/datasets>

94 <https://data.ndis.gov.au/reports-and-analyses/participant-dashboards>

95 <https://data.ndis.gov.au/explore-data>

96 <https://data.ndis.gov.au>

## 6.5 Fraud and compliance

### The NDIA continues to identify and respond to compliance risks.

The NDIA continues to improve its ability to identify and respond to fraud and compliance risks and improve the integrity of the NDIS. This quarter, one of the achievements of the multi-agency Fraud Fusion Taskforce (FFT) was the agreement of all partner agencies to a strategic prevention capability that will be scalable and reusable across other government programs and payments.

The 2023–24 Federal Government Budget provided a further \$48.3 million investment in the NDIA to crack down on fraud and non-compliance in the Scheme. This measure included funding for the development of a business case for computer systems to detect, prevent and reduce non-compliant payments. The business case has now been developed and the NDIA expects a decision from government during the next quarter regarding investment to further uplift NDIA integrity systems and processes. This uplift will further enable the detection and prevention of fraud and non-compliance.

A key element of the NDIA's compliance approach is to collaborate with providers to raise awareness of their responsibilities and to educate them on how to be compliant when claiming. The NDIA continues to build on its targeted compliance activity by regularly monitoring and responding to incorrect or unusual claims made by providers.

The December 2023 quarter continued to see an increase in the number of tip-offs received by the NDIA via the fraud reporting and scams helpline. The NDIA received 4,667 tip-offs this quarter, compared to 3,792 for the same period in 2022–23.

As of 31 December 2023, there were 47 fraud matters under investigation and an additional 4 matters under preliminary evaluation for investigation. Of these, 20 matters are under prosecution, with a total alleged fraud value of \$18.5 million.

Key fraud investigation outcomes in this quarter were:

- In October 2023, 2 offenders alleged to have acted as an organised crime group perpetrating fraud against the NDIS to the value of \$2.5 million dating back to 2019, pleaded guilty to dealing in the proceeds of crime offences.
- In October 2023, one further offender (4 charged, 2 pleaded guilty in the September 2023 quarter) alleged to have acted as an organised crime group perpetrating fraud against the NDIS to the value of \$4.5 million in 2020, as well as committing fraud against other Australian Government programs, pleaded guilty to conspiracy with the intention of dishonestly obtaining a gain and dealing in the proceeds of crime offences.
- In November 2023, a New South Wales man alleged to have defrauded the NDIS of over \$200,000 was arrested and charged with fraud related offences. The man was also charged with offences relating to the unauthorised obtaining and usage of NDIS participant data. The man and his wife, who is also a director of NDIS provider companies, have been banned from delivering supports to NDIS participants by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.
- In November 2023, a Victorian woman alleged to have defrauded the NDIS of \$461,000 was arrested and charged with fraud related offences. The woman and her 2 provider companies have been banned from delivering supports to NDIS participants by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

- In December 2023, a New South Wales man charged with defrauding the NDIS of \$1.4 million was further charged with breaching his bail in a joint operation with the Australian Federal Police, New South Wales Police and NDIA investigators. The man had re-commenced his NDIS activities after being released by the Court after serving 22 months in custody on remand.

## 6.6 NDIA's new computer system and processes

The national rollout of our new computer system and processes across Australia started as planned on 30 October 2023.

The national rollout follows extensive testing in Tasmania that started in November 2022.

We expect the national rollout will take about 18 months for all participant plans to move to our new system.

As at 31 December 2023:

- over **20,000** participants have approved plans in our new computer system
- over **4,500** new participants have had their access requests and plans developed in our new computer system
- over **800,000** payments have been made in our new computer system, valued at over \$326 million.

The new computer system will enable the NDIA to deliver a better participant experience, and to operationalise the outcomes from the 2023–24 Federal Government Budget investment, the NDIS Review, and the Disability Royal Commission into Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

We are taking a carefully planned and gradual approach to the introduction of the new system. We have made it a priority to minimise the impact the rollout has on participants, providers, NDIA staff and NDIS Partners in the Community.

With the start of the national rollout, we moved into a period where our staff and partners are working across the current and new systems. This has led to reduced volumes of access and first planning decisions being completed while staff and partners build their capacity and balance workloads across 2 systems.

We are supporting our staff and partners with the training, tools and resources they need to do their work in the new system and to continue to build their capability and confidence with the new system.

We are monitoring the new system and processes very closely so that we are prepared to respond as needed and will continue to do whatever we can to minimise the impact of this change.

### **Supporting applicants and participants to transition to the new system**

When applicants and participants come to the next step in their NDIS journey, the NDIA, or NDIS Partners in the Community, will work with them to make sure they have the support and information needed to transition to the new computer system and ways of working.

Each time we work with a participant we will tell them which computer system their plan is in. This way, participants can be sure of what to expect from the NDIS experience and can share this information with people important to them, like their supporters and providers.

New applications and first NDIS plans are now completed in our new system.

We are working with existing participants who need changes to their plan to develop their new plan in our new system. From February 2024, all expiring NDIS plans will progressively transition to our new computer system.

### **Where can participants learn more about the new system and processes?**

We have developed a dedicated website where participants can learn more about what to expect in their NDIS journey, [improvements.ndis.gov.au](https://improvements.ndis.gov.au). Information for participants is now also available in easy read on the dedicated website.

A [participant journey map](#)<sup>97</sup> is available to help people understand the changes our new computer system and processes will bring.

A range of [factsheets](#)<sup>98</sup> have been published on the NDIS website to support the new participant journey and process.

We have also published videos for participants to learn more about how to use the [my NDIS participant portal](#)<sup>99</sup>.

### **Supporting providers to transition to the new system**

The NDIA has been actively working with providers across Australia since July 2023 to help them prepare for the rollout.

We continue to make improvements to the new computer system and my NDIS provider portal based on suggestions and feedback.

Providers will transition to our new ways of working when the participants they support have NDIS plans in our new computer system.

Providers have been supported to prepare for the new computer system and using the new my NDIS provider portal using a range of dedicated and tailored information, tools and resources.

Providers can visit the NDIS website, [improvements.ndis.gov.au](https://improvements.ndis.gov.au), where they will find guides, checklists, videos, technical information and learning tools, like walk-through tutorials.

Included in the resources for providers are:

- a [tailored participant journey map for providers](#)<sup>100</sup> which explains what's changed and how providers will be supported by the new system, portal and processes
- a [video](#)<sup>101</sup> to help providers learn more about the changes and what these changes mean for providers.

97 <https://improvements.ndis.gov.au/about/what-were-doing-next>

98 <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/booklets-and-factsheets>

99 <https://improvements.ndis.gov.au/participants/my-ndis-participant-portal-and-app>

100 <https://improvements.ndis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/Participant%20journey%20for%20providers.pdf>

101 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aa-fD9xngzo&feature=youtu.be>

# ndis

[ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

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