

NDIS School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES)

**Information Booklet
Updated April 2017**

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Introduction

This information booklet is a resource developed for participants, families, carers, teachers and providers to provide an overview of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES). It contains background information on the importance of employment and useful information on accessing SLES supports and alternative employment pathways for school leavers.

Background – The importance of employment

Key messages:

- For people with disability, employment is not just about jobs. It is about being valued, useful and included in everyday life.
- As an insurance scheme, the NDIS takes a lifetime approach, investing in people with disability early to improve their outcomes later in life.
- The NDIS and other service systems facilitate access to employment for people with disability.

The benefits of employment for all individuals in society are far-reaching. Employment provides individuals with independence, a sense of identity and a connection with the community they live in. *'For people with disability, employment is not just about jobs. It's about being valued, useful and included.'*¹ Employment assists many people with disability to live an ordinary life.

The NDIS can assist young people to aspire to employment to set them on the pathway towards economic independence. *'Increased access to employment opportunities is key to improving economic security and personal wellbeing for people with disability, their families and carers.'*²

Accessing the NDIS

NDIS is the National Disability Insurance Scheme. As an insurance scheme, the NDIS takes a lifetime approach, investing in people with disability early to improve their outcomes later in life. The scheme was developed to support Australians living with disability, their parents and carers. All Australian states and territories are committed to the NDIS.

The NDIS supports people with disability to build skills and capability so they can participate in the community and employment. The NDIS helps people access supports to prepare for work where the person has work capacity but needs additional support before receiving ongoing employment support through existing systems.

The development of a participant's First Plan is the start of the lifelong relationship with the NDIS. The participant's NDIS plan can be reviewed every 12 months to ensure the participant is getting the supports they need. For further information on the First Plan process see the [My NDIS Pathway guide](#) on the NDIS website. The NDIS will help participants to:

- **Access mainstream services and supports:** These are the services available for all Australians from people like doctors or teachers through the health and education systems. It also covers areas like public housing and the justice and aged care systems.

¹ Business Council of Australia, *Recognising Ability Report*, October 2015.

² *Recognising Ability: Business and the Employment of People with Disability*.

- **Access community services and supports:** These are activities and services available to everyone in the community, such as sports clubs, community groups, libraries or charities.
- **Maintain informal support arrangements:** This is the help people with disability get from family and friends. It is support that people don't pay for and this support is generally part of most people's lives.
- **Receive reasonable and necessary funded supports:** The NDIS can pay for supports that are reasonable and necessary. This means they are related to a person's disability and are required to live an ordinary life and achieve goals.

NDIS and employment supports

The NDIS funds reasonable and necessary supports that help a participant to reach their goals, objectives and aspirations. There are various supports available under the NDIS.

NDIS initiatives complement existing mainstream supports. Mainstream employment services and programs, including both disability-targeted and open employment services, will continue to be responsible for providing important employment advice and support, for example:

- Mainstream supports continue to play a critical role in supporting people with disability and their employment aspirations. Mainstream supports also work with employers to encourage and assist them to hire and be inclusive of people with disability in the workplace (e.g. support, training, resources and incentives for hiring people with disability, such as wage subsidies).
- For young people, including Year 12 school leavers, Education supports students in their post-school transition.
- Disability Employment Services supports people with disabilities who are ready for work.
- Refer to the publicly available document - [the COAG \(Council of Australian Government\) Applied Principles](#) for further information on the responsibilities of the NDIS and other service systems.

The type of employment supports that NDIS offers include:

- Employment related assessment and counselling
- Assistance in specialised supported employment
- Individual employment support
- Employment preparation and support in a group.

School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES)

Key messages:

- SLES is a new NDIS funded employment support for Year 12 students to set young people with a disability on the pathway towards economic independence.
- To receive SLES funding students must also be eligible for the NDIS.
- SLES complements but does not replace existing mainstream supports.
- All NDIS participants will develop their plan with their Planner or Local Area Coordinator and have the opportunity to discuss their options for SLES funding.
- The type of SLES activities should be individually tailored and align with the specific employment goals of the participant.

SLES, is one example of a reasonable and necessary support for Year 12 school leavers. It is available for individuals who are eligible for NDIS and identified as suitable for SLES through a functional work assessment administered in Year 12 at school.

Participants can have SLES and other reasonable and necessary funded supports in their NDIS plan. They also have choice and the control over how they use funded supports in their NDIS plan. This includes choice of how the supports are given and which service providers they use. SLES complements but does not replace existing mainstream supports. There are a number of post-school options that may be available for Year 12 school leavers with a disability:

1. **SLES (School Leaver Employment Supports).** If you are a Year 12 school leaver, SLES offers individualised support for up to 2 years after finishing Year 12 to help you develop skills and confidence to find and keep a job in open employment.
2. **Other NDIS Employment supports.** The NDIS is responsible for providing reasonable and necessary supports that assist people with disability to take part in work. NDIS also works with employers to encourage the inclusion of people with disability in the workplace. If you are eligible for NDIS you will take part in an individualised planning process to help you identify supports to prepare for, find and maintain jobs. This may include skills development training and supported employment opportunities.
3. **Community participation.** If you are a young person with disability, social, community and civic participation may be an alternative to employment or further education that can support your transition from school to adult life.
4. **DES (Disability Employment Services).** If you are a person with disability, a DES provider can help you to get ready to look for a job, find a job and keep a job. Centrelink helps to work out which employment services best meet your needs.

Why and how was SLES designed?

The NDIS funds reasonable and necessary employment supports to set young people with a disability on the pathway towards economic independence, to build their confidence to trial and test different options and give employment a go. SLES is based on research and evidence in best practice in transition to employment, for example the NSW Transition to Work (TTW) Program. SLES was introduced as an early intervention approach for Year 12 school leavers designed to;

- Increase young people's confidence and aspirations for employment.
- Partner with Education to support the pathway from school into post-school life.
- Engage providers who understand the needs of employers and are willing to innovate.
- Enable young people to have choice and control of provider.

What supports are available under SLES?

SLES is not a program; it is an individualised approach to funding employment supports. It is designed to provide a range of supports to participants for up to two years to assist them to become work-ready. The participant's funding can be reviewed either at 12 months or in the case of exceptional change in circumstances (for example, the person has gained a paid job).

SLES supports will be tailored to meet individual employment goals outlined in that person's plan. This may include work experience, job skills training and specific travel training such as commuting to and from work experience. Participants will meet with their Local Area Coordinators or Support Coordinator to discuss their options for SLES supports that contribute to achieving an employment outcome. In general, participants will receive SLES support for about 3 days per week; however, the actual days and hours of support received will vary and will be agreed between the participant and their provider.

Choosing a SLES provider

When considering which provider is right for them, participants may speak with their provider about their goals and support needs. Factors participants might take into account include the individualised level of support the provider offers, the outcomes delivered, the disability type the provider has previously supported and whether the SLES providers are also DES-ESS providers. All providers must complete the [the NDIA registration process](#) before delivering participant supports.

When participants first choose a provider, they can develop a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with them about how they will best work together and the type of supports that will be offered by the provider. This SLA helps participants and providers to be clear about the mutual expectations of the support provided. SLES supports can also be complemented by other funded supports in a person's NDIS plan.

Ultimately, the type of supports should be individually tailored and align with the specific goals of the participant. The provider should also be given enough time to get the participant ready for employment. If the arrangement is not working the participant can speak with the provider and work with their LAC or Support Coordinator to change providers.

How will success be measured?

NDIA will measure SLES outcomes by collating and assessing qualitative feedback from participants, carers and providers as well as quantitative data on performance. The types of tools NDIA will use for measurement include:

- Participant and carer surveys
- Plan reviews
- Provider reporting tool
- Published information about provider performance to drive informed choice.

Ultimately, success will be measured by an increase in NDIS participants who are aspiring for employment, who have included employment as part of their plan and are on a pathway to working in the open labour market.

SLES is rolling out progressively across States and Territories

Key messages:

- Following trials in the ACT and Tasmania in 2015, SLES is being rolled out progressively to other States and Territories.
- The goal is for all NDIS eligible Australian Year 12 School Leavers who are likely to benefit from SLES to have been identified and have access to SLES supports by 2018.

Following trials in the ACT and Tasmania in 2015, SLES is being rolled out progressively to other States and Territories (in line with the approved NDIS phasing arrangements agreed by State and Territories). This staged approach to the SLES roll out is important to ensure that the right foundations are set in place across all regions.

From July 2017, SLES is available to Year 12 school leavers in NSW, ACT, Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia, in line with the bilateral agreements and phasing schedules for Victoria and NSW. This means that for Year 12 school leavers in these regions phasing into the NDIS in 2017/18, SLES will be offered to them as a reasonable and necessary support as part of their NDIS plan. Other funded employment supports will be available in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia. This is summarised in the SLES roll out by geography map below at Figure 1.

Figure 1: SLES roll out by geography map

If you are a 2017 Year 12 school leaver and:

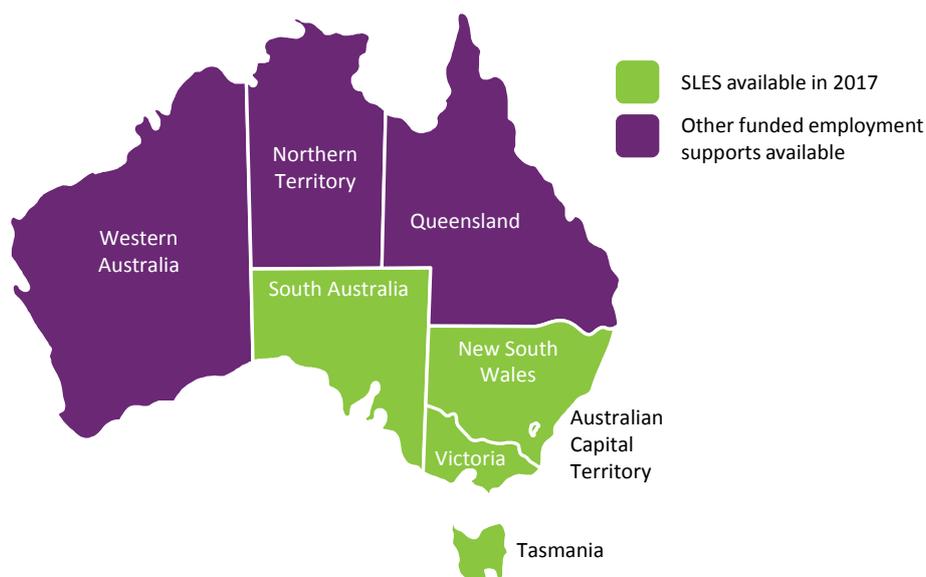
- **have completed a SLES Functional Capacity Assessment (FCA)**
- **meet the NDIS access requirements**
- **live in...**

[New South Wales](#), the [Australian Capital Territory](#), [Victoria](#), [Tasmania](#), or [South Australia](#) ...

SLES will be offered as a funded support as part of your NDIS plan.

[Queensland](#), [Northern Territory](#) or [Western Australia](#)...

and you are a current participant of the NDIS or entering the scheme, you will receive other funded employment supports in your NDIS plan.



If you will be a future school leaver and are eligible for the NDIS...

planning is underway to make SLES available in your area from 2018.

Pathway to employment with SLES

Key messages:

- The NDIS prepares people with disability for employment. It is the responsibility of DES to find the participants a job once the agreed timeframe for SLES supports has concluded.
- There is a different pathway to access SLES for current and new NDIS participants.

The pathway for a Year 12 student to access depends on whether they are a current NDIS participant or will be accessing the NDIS for the first time.

The first step for all Year 12 students is the SLES Assessment. The Functional Capacity Assessment (FCA) is completed to find out if a student with disability is likely to benefit from SLES. This step is completed by the student's teacher at school. Teachers and schools are supported by the Education department and NDIA with training and resources on how to complete these assessments.

If a student is not a current NDIS participant, the next step is to determine and confirm their eligibility for the NDIS. This step is led by the NDIA.

All students, both current and new NDIS participants, are then informed of their SLES assessment outcome and whether they will benefit from SLES funding.

The next steps in the SLES pathway depend on the individual student's SLES outcome and NDIS eligibility. A NDIS planner, Local Area Coordinator or Support Coordinator will contact each student to explain their options for employment supports. If you are not suitable for SLES and not eligible for the NDIS, you will be linked with the Information, Linkages and Capacity (ILC).

NDIA is working in partnership to improve student outcomes

Key messages:

- NDIA has been working with people with disabilities, participants, service providers, mainstream agencies and communities to raise young people's aspirations for employment.

The successful implementation of SLES requires strong partnerships and collaboration with our stakeholders: NDIA National Office and Regional Offices; state/territory education agencies; schools and teachers; central state/territory agencies; young people, their families and carers; advocates; and providers.

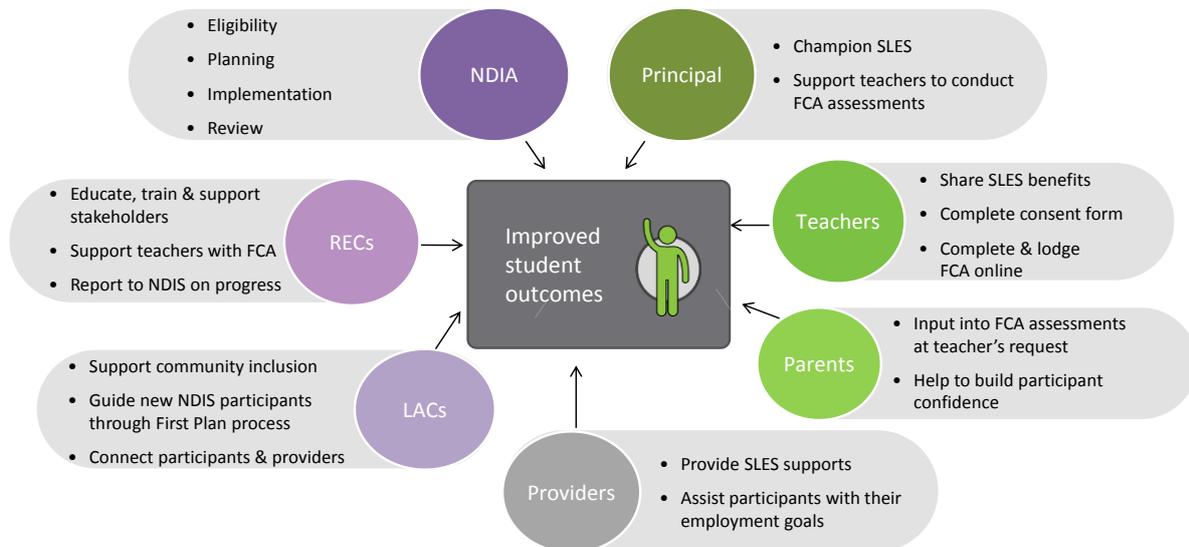
NDIA has been working with people with disabilities, participants, service providers, mainstream agencies and communities to raise young people's aspirations for employment. For example, the NDIA is working in partnership with Education to support people with disability to make a smooth transition into SLES or other employment supports. Principals and support teachers at local schools are key partners in this approach. Key stakeholders and roles are outlined below and illustrated at Figure 2:

- **Local Area Coordinators (LACs)** help better include people with a disability within the community. LACs guide participants through the NDIS First Plan process. They are also the key contact to assist with planning for young people in Year 12 who have been assessed and identified as suitable for SLES. Each participant will be assigned a LAC who will work with them to incorporate SLES in their Plan and help them to choose a suitable provider to achieve their employment goals. LACs will also provide assistance to NDIS eligible school leavers who are assessed as not requiring SLES supports, for example by providing information on suitable alternative post-school options.



- **Regional Employment Champions (RECs)** are subject matter experts in each region where SLES is available. RECs have access to SLES training and resources and will provide support across each region to help stakeholders implement SLES. For example, RECs will be involved in delivering information sessions, liaising with local schools and assisting with teacher training sessions in each region.
- **Teachers** play an important role in the SLES process to speak with parents and guardians about the SLES process and benefits. They may complete the Information and Recording consent form, conduct the FCA for Year 12 students and complete and lodge FCA online.
- **Principals support the SLES roll-out by** communicating the benefits of SLES and the outcomes with parents and students and talking about the importance of employment. Principals can also provide assistance by helping teachers to conduct the FCA assessment.
- **Parents** can input into the FCA at the teacher's request. They can assist by providing information about current and future work capacity.
- **Providers** assist participants to work towards their employment goals by providing SLES supports for up to 24 months. The nature of the supports offered will vary for each participant and can be subject to an agreement between the participant and provider in a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

FIGURE 2: KEY STAKEHOLDERS



Glossary of key terms

Acronym	Expanded term
DES	Disability Employment Services
FCA	Functional Capacity Assessment
LAC	Local Area Coordinator
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
REC	Regional Employment Champion
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SLES	School Leavers Employment Supports

More information

For more information on Commonwealth programs, payments and allowances for students with disability contact Centrelink on 13 27 17 or go to the [Centrelink website](#)

For more information about NDIA:

Visit: www.ndis.gov.au

Call NDIA contact centre: 1800 800 110*

For people with a hearing loss or speech loss:

TTY: 1800 555 677

Speak to Listen

(Speech-to-relay): 1800 555 727

For people who need help with English

Translating and Interpreting Service: 131 450

*The call centre is open Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm EST

*1800 calls are free from fixed lines. However, calls from mobiles may be charged.

