

# UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS)



Macular  
Disease  
Foundation  
AUSTRALIA

The NDIS provides support to Australians aged under 65 who have permanent and significant disability, their families and carers.

Your financial situation will not affect your eligibility. The NDIS pays for all disability supports and services, and participants aren't

required to pay co-contribution fees.

The NDIS is not means tested.

Through the NDIS, you can source information and connections to services in your local community, as well as information about what support is available to you.

## Am I eligible?

To be eligible for the NDIS, you must:

- be under the age of 65 when applying
- be an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or hold a protected special category visa.

If you are accessing the NDIS due to vision loss, you must also satisfy the following disability eligibility requirements:

- Permanent blindness in both eyes, diagnosed and assessed by an ophthalmologist (an optometrist report is insufficient for NDIS purposes) as follows:
  - Corrected visual acuity (extent to which an object can be brought into focus) on the Snellen Scale must be less than or equal to 6/60 in both eyes; or
  - Constriction to within 10 degrees or less of arc of central fixation in the better eye, irrespective of corrected visual acuity (i.e. visual fields are reduced to a measured arc of 10 degrees or less); or
  - A combination of visual defects resulting in the same degree of visual impairment as that occurring in the above points.<sup>1</sup>

- Disorders of the choroid and retina when the requirement of permanent blindness is not met:
  - Behr's syndrome
  - Kearns-Sayre syndrome
  - Optic atrophy
  - Retinitis pigmentosa
  - Retinoschisis (degenerative and hereditary types/juvenile retinoschisis)
  - Stargardt disease
  - Usher syndrome.<sup>2</sup>

### Note:

This fact sheet only focuses on the disability requirements related to vision. However, you may have other conditions that will make you eligible for disability support. Contact the NDIS directly on **1800 800 110** or at **[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)** for more information.

For further explanation or clarification about these disability requirements, please contact our National Helpline on **1800 111 709**.

## How do I apply?

You'll need to contact the NDIS on **1800 800 110** to request access. This can be done verbally or by asking for an Access Request Form to fill in. An NDIS assessment will be scheduled if you are eligible. You can find further information at [www.ndis.gov.au/how-apply-ndis/what-access-request-form](http://www.ndis.gov.au/how-apply-ndis/what-access-request-form)

The assessment and planning process will form the basis of an NDIS Plan. This is a document that outlines your needs, goals and disability supports required, along with any funding you may receive. Your plan will be tailored to your own needs and will be reviewed periodically.

## Assessment and planning

Once your eligibility has been confirmed you'll need to contact low vision services providers who can help you navigate the NDIS assessment and planning process. They will also provide a specialist low vision assessment to be able to identify your low vision needs, and recommend appropriate supports and services, including low vision technologies. For help in accessing a low vision provider, please call our National Helpline on **1800 111 709**.

### What other support is available?

If you're not eligible for the NDIS, you may be able to find alternative support. If you're aged 65 and over, you may be eligible for aged care support. There are also many state/territory or local government programs that provide support. Contact MDFA on **1800 111 709** for further information.





## Need more information?

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Learn more about macular disease at [www.mdfoundation.com.au](http://www.mdfoundation.com.au).

How's your macula? Take the quiz at [www.CheckMyMacula.com.au](http://www.CheckMyMacula.com.au).

You can also access our free, personalised support services and order information kits and Amsler grids by calling our National Helpline on **1800 111 709**.

MDFA has a free newsletter and you can sign up to receive invitations to education sessions and events in your area.

Macular Disease Foundation Australia is committed to reducing the incidence and impact of macular disease, by providing up-to-date information, advice and support.

**References:** 1. <https://www.ndis.gov.au/operational-guideline/access/list-a.html>  
2. <https://www.ndis.gov.au/operational-guideline/access/list-b.html>

**Disclaimer:** Information in this publication is considered by Macular Disease Foundation Australia to be accurate at the time of publication. While every care has been taken in its preparation, medical advice should always be sought from a doctor and individual advice about your eye health should be sought from your eye health professional. Macular Disease Foundation Australia cannot be liable for any error or omission in this publication or for damages arising from it, and makes no warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied in relation to this publication.