



**Standing Committee on Health Aged Care and Sport  
Answer to Question on Notice**

---

**Hearing Health and Wellbeing of Australia**

**Reference No:** SQ19-000051

**AUSTRALIAN HEARING'S PROVIDER ROLE**

**Hearing:** 25 February 2019

**Hansard Page:** 6

**Question:**

CHAIR: Is part of the consideration maintaining Australian Hearing's role as the sole provider?  
Or is it going to a contestable model?

Ms Faulkner: I'll have to take that question on notice, I'm sorry.

**Answer:**

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is working collaboratively with the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to support the transition of hearing service program clients into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) where access criteria is met.

The NDIA will continue to work with DoH and DHS after the transition to consider the role of Australian Hearing.

Recent changes to the process of accessing the NDIS for this cohort means there should be no disadvantage to participants.

To provide appropriate safeguards for participants and regulate the market, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is being introduced progressively before 1 July 2020.



**Standing Committee on Health Aged Care and Sport  
Answer to Question on Notice**

---

**Hearing Health and Wellbeing of Australia**

**Reference No:** SQ19-000053

**TELEHEALTH SUPPORT FUNDING**

**Hearing:** 25 February 2019

**Hansard Page:** 22

**Question:**

Dr FREELANDER: Would the NDIS look at this? Would telemedicine-type consultations be funded through the NDIS?

Ms Faulkner: We wouldn't fund such projects. We fund individuals to purchase services. But if there were opportunities for participants to engage in telehealth to get support, we would certainly—

Dr FREELANDER: You would fund them to do that?

Ms Faulkner: We would support them to do that. I would have to take on notice what funding we would provide to do that. It's a purchase of a service and a plan.

**Answer:**

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is continually exploring ways to provide better participant outcomes, facilitate the growth of the market, and provide a financially sustainable Scheme. The NDIA acknowledges the need to enhance and customise service delivery for participants in remote areas with respect to culture, context and location.

The NDIA's extensive spread of remote Community Connectors across remote areas will assist in locating participants and aligning them to services funded in their plans, which may include using virtual methods where suitable and cost effective.



Standing Committee on Health Aged Care and Sport  
Answer to Question on Notice

Hearing Health and Wellbeing of Australia

Reference No: SQ19-000054

**NORTHERN TERRITORY AUSLAN PROVIDERS**

Hearing: 26 February 2019

Hansard Page: 24-25

**Question:**

Mr GEORGANAS: When we conducted the inquiry, there were four in the Northern Territory. I'd be really keen to find out whether that has increased or whether there are any plans to address the huge shortage in the Northern Territory.

Ms Ham: I can say that the provider's active in providing Auslan, as support has grown over time. Since transition to full scheme, since 2016, and in the six months to 31 December, we've now got 56 providers who are providing Auslan support.

Mr GEORGANAS: This is in the Northern Territory?

Ms Ham: No, sorry; nationally. I don't have the Northern Territory data. We could take that question on notice to give you that breakdown in the Northern Territory. Then, if general interpreter items are also included, there are 135 providers actively claiming for supports. I think the important thing to remember, though, is that there's often a lag in claims being made, so this is probably under-indicating the number of providers that are actually delivering those services. It would continue to be monitored over time to see what that increase actually looks like. But it's also important to note that quite a number of those providers are sole traders rather than organisations delivering Auslan services.

**Answer:**

There are **two** support catalogue items that refer to Auslan related supports. These are:

- Auslan or signed English training (03\_089\_0121\_1\_1).
- Auslan or Signed English Interpreting (21 002).

In addition, these services may be accessed through a **third** item, however not all payments under this item will necessarily relate to Auslan related supports:

- Interpreting and translation (03\_090\_0121\_1\_1).

In the six months to 31 December 2018, there was one provider supporting participants who entered the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in the Northern Territory (NT) that was associated with payments related to Auslan (the first two dot points above), out of the 56 providers nationally.

If the general interpreter item (the third dot point) is also included, there were a total of two providers supporting participants who entered the NDIS in the NT in that same six month period out of the 135 providers nationally.

In addition, it is possible that participants who self-manage have accessed Auslan through other service providers not included in the above analysis.

Due to lags in payments, these figures may increase as further claims are made relating to that support period. In addition, the irregular claiming by providers can mean that not every active provider submits claims in a six-month period



**Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport  
Answer to Question on Notice**

---

**Hearing Health and Wellbeing of Australia**

**Reference No:** SQ19-000055

**UTILISATION OF FUNDING IN PLANS FOR AUSLAN INTERPRETER  
SERVICES**

**Hearing:** 27 February 2019

**Hansard Page:** 25-26

**Question:**

Ms Faulkner: What we would do there is look at usage of plans. Participants will have a plan, as you rightly said, with a number of supports in that plan, and as part of our quarterly reporting we look at the usage of those plans and the usage of those supports for a range of disabilities.

CHAIR: Do you have any data on the use of Auslan interpreters arising from that?

Ms Faulkner: Not that I'm aware of, but I'll take that on notice and have a look. The quarterly report is obviously a publicly available document. I'm not sure whether there's specifically anything in the latest report.

CHAIR: But even if it's not in the quarterly reporting—presumably there are plans being issued that include set functions and hours for interpreters.

Ms Faulkner: Yes. So, we look at the usage—

CHAIR: You would know if it's not being—

Ms Faulkner: Yes.

Mr Adams: Deaf Australia

**Answer:**

Participant choice and control allows a participant to choose to use core supports flexibly for a range of services within a support category, including Auslan interpreters.

Therefore, the National Disability Insurance Agency cannot reliably estimate a denominator to calculate utilisation of Auslan interpreters.