

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Referral of inquiry and terms of reference

1.1 The Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme was established on 1 September 2016. The committee is composed of five members and five senators.

1.2 The committee is tasked with inquiring into:

- a. the implementation, performance and governance of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS);
- b. the administration and expenditure of the NDIS; and
- c. such other matters in relation to the NDIS as may be referred to it by either House of the Parliament.

1.3 After 30 June each year, the committee presents an annual report to the Parliament on the activities of the committee during the year, in addition to other reports on any other matters it considers relevant.

1.4 The committee is also able to inquire into specific aspects of the Scheme. The committee agreed to undertake an inquiry into the provision of hearing services under the NDIS on 30 November 2016.

1.5 The terms of reference for the inquiry are as follows:

1. That the joint committee inquire into and report on the provision of hearing services under the NDIS, with particular reference to:
  - (a) the eligibility criteria for determining access to, and service needs of, deaf and hearing impaired people under the NDIS;
  - (b) delays in receiving services, with particular emphasis on early intervention services;
  - (c) the adequacy of funding for hearing services under the NDIS;
  - (d) the accessibility of hearing services, including in rural and remote areas;
  - (e) the principle of choice of hearing service provider;
  - (f) the liaison with key stakeholders in the design of NDIS hearing services, particularly in the development of reference packages;
  - (g) investment in research and innovation in hearing services; and
  - (h) any other related matters.
2. The committee to report by 23 March 2017.

### Reporting by the committee

1.6 In March 2017, the committee delayed finalising its report as it was expecting the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to release baseline early

intervention reference packages. The NDIA had indicated to the committee that it would release the packages by the end of April 2017;<sup>1</sup> however, by 1 September 2017 the NDIA had not released them. The Agency explained that further actuarial modelling was required and would be finalised by the end of 2017.<sup>2</sup>

1.7 The committee decided to release an interim report while it awaited the packages. The report focused on two critical issues: the access criteria to the NDIS for deaf and hard of hearing people and access to and provision of early intervention services for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. The report was tabled on 14 September 2017. The report, and the Australian Government's response to the recommendations, can be accessed from the committee's website: [www.aph.gov.au/joint\\_ndis](http://www.aph.gov.au/joint_ndis).

1.8 It was the committee's intention to release a final report once the NDIA had provided it with the reference packages; however, the packages were still unavailable at May 2018.

### **Conduct of the inquiry**

1.9 The committee received 55 submissions to its inquiry from individuals and organisations. Three public hearings were conducted on 20 February 2017, 24 March 2017, and 7 March 2018. Transcripts from these hearings, together with submissions and responses to questions on notice, are available on the committee's website.

### **Structure of report**

1.10 This report is comprised of two chapters:

- chapter one outlines the background and administration of the inquiry;
- chapter two discusses the objectives of the NDIS legislation, pathway to packages, transdisciplinary package quotes, and quantum of funding.

### **Acknowledgements**

1.11 The committee would like to thank the individuals and organisations that made written submissions to the inquiry, as well as those who gave evidence at the public hearings. We are grateful for their time and expertise.

### **Note on terminology and references**

1.12 The committee uses the term 'deaf and hard of hearing' to encompass the diverse community that has some form of hearing loss, including people who identify as deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind.

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1 Peter de Natris, Expert Adviser, and Louise Glanville, CEO, NDIA, *Official Committee Hansard*, 24 March 2017, pp. 14 and 17.

2 NDIA, additional information received 1 September 2017.