

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2017-2018 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome:** National Disability Insurance Agency

**Question No:** NDIA SQ17-000142

**Topic:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interpreter services

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator McCarthy,** asked:

There was a decision made by the NDIA some months ago to not allow people with English as a second language to purchase interpreter services as a part of their NDIS package. This impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Can the Government confirm if this is still the case or has this decision been changed? Who actually made this decision and what consultation was done with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives on whether this was appropriate?

**Answer:**

The NDIA does not fund interpreting services as part of a participant's NDIS plan. This decision is to ensure that the NDIA complies with core legislative requirements that stipulates that in order to be considered reasonable and necessary, a support must:

- be related to the participant's disability; and
- not include day-to-day living costs that are not related to a participant's disability support needs.

The NDIA is a member of the Commonwealth Inter-Departmental Committee on Indigenous Interpreting. The NDIA has provided direct input, regarding its experience accessing Indigenous Language Interpreting, to the Commonwealth Ombudsman's own motion investigation into the Accessibility of Indigenous Interpreting Services.

Best practice principles identified by the Inter-Departmental Committee will be incorporated into staff guidelines to ensure consistency of practice across all locations. A core principle within these practice guidelines is a requirement for staff to ensure interpreters are booked well in advance of planned visits.

The NDIA is in the process of finalising a memorandum of understanding to ensure access to Telephone Interpreter Services for providers to draw from when engaging with a participant requiring interpreter support to action their funded supports.