



Diff-abled

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A WORD FROM THE FOUNDER

Welcome to the first edition of *Diff-abled*, FBA CARE's new quarterly newsletter! Through this new publication, we aim to keep you posted about news and views in the disability sector and our place in the fast-evolving National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Our first issue has reports on two Royal Commissions – into aged care quality and safety and disability – an explainer on the different options for managing NDIS plans, a look at the customer satisfaction with the NDIS and an update on how the NDIS managed the COVID pandemic.

For us at FBA CARE, it has been a busy and productive start to 2021. We have welcomed several new staff, including a Business Development Manager and a Compliance Manager. In February, we were thrilled to get a write-up in *The Age*. We are about to partner with Football Victoria (Soccer) and become a Major Sponsor of the Victorian Cerebral Palsy State Team. And we will soon launch a new group activities program.

We will also profile an FBA CARE staff member in each edition and first up is our Receptionist, Alis, the first person most of you will meet when visiting our office.

Happy reading!

Faris Bashir

Founder & Managing Director

www.fbacare.com.au



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ON THE COVER

Our cover image shows our participant Adam Keep with Collingwood AFL players Scott Pendlebury (Captain, left) and Brayden Maynard at the 'Pies first public training session since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We are grateful to Annie and the Collingwood FC Community Team for the "bucket list" opportunity for Adam, who is terminally ill.

NDIA BACKS ASSESSMENTS

The NDIA has defended the roll-out of independent assessments of participants after a statement by disability organisations.

The NDIS clarified that there are no time limits for assessments, they will be completed by health care professionals, people can choose their own assessor from a panel where possible and assessments are free to participants – paid for by the NDIS.

Decisions will continue to be made by NDIA delegates and the decision review process is unchanged.

COVID-19 PROVISIONS IN NDIS CLOSED

Temporary measures the NDIA put in place to help participants access services disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic ended on February 28, with the Agency issuing a statement in late February clarifying support coordination measures.

Since March 2020, participants who did not have specific funding in their plans for support coordination, or needed more support coordination, could temporarily access other areas of their plan funding to pay for sup-

port coordination. That ended on February 28.

“As restrictions ease around the country, the need for flexible support coordination has also eased as participants return to their usual services or are able to easily ... and access their preferred services ...” the Agency said. “The NDIA wants to provide clarity ... that those with support coordination included in their plan and budget will continue to have access to this support.”

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PROVIDING CARE IN A MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY

One of Australia’s greatest strengths is its cultural diversity which has become central to its national identity. In 2016 Faris Bashir founded FBA CARE, a disability support service provider, for this exact reason.

“I migrated with my family from Africa to Australia in 2004. Both my mother and brother have disabilities and the biggest challenge for them was the language barrier between them and their carers,” says Bashir. “I started FBA CARE because I wanted to provide high quality support services to individuals living with disability from a culturally diverse and bilingual team of support workers.”

FBA CARE is a plan manager and service provider in charge of each participant’s plan under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). NDIS offers people living with disability more choice and control over the services they receive. Bashir has set up and run several businesses and in the early days of FBA CARE – and the NDIS itself – worked in plan management and support coordination himself. “I know the disability sector from

the ground up,” says Bashir. “We have staff fluent in Vietnamese, Arabic, Turkish, Spanish, Bosnian, Burmese, Mandarin and more,” says Bashir. “We also separate all of our service teams. This means the plan managers who run the finance side, the support coordinators who help participants put their plan together, and the direct support workers who deliver the care require the participant’s permission to share information with one another. This reassures our participants there is no conflict of interest.”

FBA CARE’s direct support ranges from providing personal care and household and gardening tasks, to community engagement for participants and coordinating allied health services.

FBA CARE’s group-centred activities work in a similar way, helping participants build confidence, independence and connections with others.

© This is an edited version of an article first published in *The Age*, February 19, 2021



Our participant Tony (centre), with Support Worker Basam (left) and Sebiha, Support Coordinator. This image appeared with our write-up in The Age, February 19, 2021 (See page 3)

ROYAL COMMISSION LOOKS AT COGNITIVE DISABILITY

The Disability Royal Commission is examining the education and training of health professionals who care for and treat people with cognitive disability in its latest round of hearings before Chair Ronald Sackville AO QC.

“Despite some worthwhile initiatives, the evidence before the Royal Commission indicates that there has been and continues to be systemic neglect of people with cognitive disability in the Australian health system,” Mr Sackville said.

Day 3 of Public Hearing 10 (March 2, 2021) was an opportunity to continue to examine some of the issues the Commission has already identified, including how training and education can be adapted to produce better quality care and outcomes for people with cognitive disability.

Issues explored with health and allied professionals in this hearing include:

- content of curricula at undergraduate and post-graduate schools and colleges relating to the needs of people with cognitive disability
- accreditation and oversight of education and training programs
- practice standards and professional competencies
- post-registration and specialty education and training as well as continuing professional development
- the extent of involvement of people with cognitive disability and, where appropriate, their families and support persons in the education and training of health professionals
- misdiagnosis of health conditions of people with cognitive disability
- cultural attitudes, assumptions and beliefs about the quality of life and value of people with disability
- communication with people with cognitive disability, their families and carers.

MANAGING YOUR NDIS BUDGET

Managing your annual budget from the National Disability Insurance Scheme can be one of the biggest headaches you are likely to face as a participant in the NDIS but there are several options and help is at hand to find the option that works best for you.

There are three broad options for managing your NDIS budget ... or four if you count any combination of the first three. You can choose any option and can switch between them but you must first let the National Disability Insurance Agency know if you change your plan management arrangements.

Agency Managed

Under this option, the NDIA manages your budget arranges all supports and handles all invoices, leaving you with no paperwork to think about. Only NDIS-registered providers may be engaged and pricing is capped for each service.

Payment for the service is claimed directly by the provider from the NDIS. The NDIS Portal allows you to keep track of your budget and what services have been claimed.

Agency management is by far the simplest option but there is little flexibility about the providers you can choose or what they can charge.

Plan Managed

Plan Management allows you to have more choice and control over your budget and services, without the hassle of self-management. A plan manager who you are able to choose is responsible for management of the funds.

There is more flexibility in the service providers that can be engaged because they don't have to be NDIS-registered. A big advantage of plan management is that you have an independent partner

to help you navigate the NDIS and act as your adviser.

If you choose plan management for your NDIS budget, you must request this at your NDIS planning meeting. The good thing is that funds to cover plan management will not come out of your Budget as it is under the "Improved Life Choices" scheme.

The only downside of plan management is that you won't be able to see your NDIS budget balance and remaining funds through the NDIS participant portal but your plan manager should send you a monthly report. Plan management is the best of both worlds.

Self Managed

You are able to choose to manage your NDIS budget independently. There are certain criteria that must be met if you would like to self-manage. You will need to organise all your own supports and maintain records and receipts for all services provided.

It is best to open a bank account for your NDIS budget so it is separate from your daily expenses. You will need to request invoices from service providers and process them through the NDIS participant portal.

Even under self-management, NDIS pricing still applies. This means that the funding allocated to say, physical therapy, is capped according to NDIS pricing and a non-registered provider may be out of reach if they charge more than the NDIS scheduled fee. You are able to pay the out-of-pocket costs if you would like that particular service.

If you are keen to self-manage but feel that you need assistance, say from an accountant or financial planner, you may be able to receive "Capacity building" funding for this from the NDIS and this is included in your plan. (Continued on page 6)

NDIS DEALS WITH COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Essential supports continued to be provided to participants throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the NDIA reported in its report to Disability Ministers for the December quarter 2020. The rate of infection was 2.5% lower among participants than the general population and by January 18, 2021, there were no known active COVID-19 cases among participants.

By December 30, 183 participants and 219 disability support workers had returned positive tests for COVID-19, with nine participant deaths and the death of one worker. Two of the participant deaths were from infections acquired in hospital and five were acquired in aged care.

Australia was one of the first two countries in the world to roll out a dedicated COVID-19 response plan for its disability community, the NDIA reported, with a management and operational plan completed in April 2020 after consultation with participants from the start of the pandemic.



The Victorian Cerebral Palsy State Team (7-a-side soccer) at training. FBA CARE is proud to be a Major Sponsor of the Team for the 2021 season.

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AGED CARE ROYAL COMMISSION LOOKS TO NDIS AS MODEL

The NDIS has been looked to as a model for the future delivery of aged care in the wake of the damning final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The 148 recommendations of the commission's final report after a two-year inquiry include enhancing the capacity of the Aged Care Safety and Quality Authority – in line with a similar entity to oversee the NDIS. There is also a recommendation for star ratings for providers – another feature of the NDIS.

The Federal Government has committed \$452 million in an immediate cash boost to the aged care sector while it considers the final report whose first recommendation is new federal legislation.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison acknowledged there were many distressing stories told in public hearings and there was much work to be done to improve aged care.

“I warned when I called the Royal Commission there will be stories that will be hard to hear. And that has been the case. But at the same time, we have also heard heart-warming stories of dedication and with the challenges of COVID-19 in the past year, we need to acknowledge the hard work performed by our aged care workforce,” he said.

Horror stories that emerged in public hearings included the use of chemical and physical restraints in aged care facilities and poor quality meals. Another recommendation of the Commission headed by Tony Pagone QC and Lynelle Briggs AO is to end the practice of people under 65 being admitted to aged care facilities.

The Commission recommended nine ways to stop young people entering aged care including new hospital discharge protocols with State and Territory governments and referring young people with disability at risk of entering aged care to the NDIA instead of Aged Care Assessment Teams.



ALIS OZEN, RECEPTIONIST

Alis is the first person many participants meet face-to-face at FBA CARE so her role is very important.

Alis says what she enjoys about her role is the many professional and kind people she works with who go out of their way to help our participants. Helping participants is what Alis enjoys most about her job.

Away from work, Alis enjoys time with family, especially her 11-year-old daughter, and “enjoying life”.

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MANAGING YOUR NDIS BUDGET

How about a mix? (Continued from page 4)

You may be happy for the NDIA to manage most of your budget but wish to continue engaging a service provider under a particular category who is not NDIS-registered. If for example you have been seeing a speech therapist for a number of years, developed a good rapport with them and want to continue seeing them this may be possible under a mix of agency management and self management. Under full agency management, it is impossible to engage the speech therapist because they are not NDIS-registered.

In such a case, you can choose to have agency-management for everything in your NDIS plan except speech therapy, which you manage yourself. You will be responsible for engaging the speech therapist, paying them and reporting to the NDIA on the amount you've spent on speech therapy or any other supports you are self-managing. The only downside is that speech therapy falls under allied health so therefore all of that support category must be self-managed.

Whichever option you choose, it's important you are comfortable with your choice and remember that you can switch to different plan management arrangements at any time.

Please remember FBA CARE is ready and able to help with all your NDIA needs. FBA CARE is an NDIS-registered plan manager and has special strengths in providing qualified and multi-lingual staff to ensure you understand everything about your NDIS plan. Contact us to find out more – phone 1300 809 566 or email info@fbacare.com.au

FBA CARE's services

FBA CARE is an NDIS-accredited disability services provider offering services in Support coordination, Personal care, Plan management, Community participation, Allied health services, Group activities and Respite accommodation.

Our multi-lingual staff are fluent in Arabic, English, Burmese, Karen, Bosnian, Vietnamese, Spanish and Farsi (Persian).

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