

HELP Enterprises gladly submits the below responses to the submission on the NDIS Market in Queensland.

1. Transitioning to the NDIS

**Response:** Preparations for the NDIS began 2 years before the official rollout to ensure systems and business processes were as ready as could be, based on the limited information about what the NDIS would look like available at the time. One barrier was the lack of clear information about the processes and operating expectations of the NDIA for providers to enable clear information to be gathered and passed onto service users. This contributed to a divide between service users and providers, as, many service users felt providers were withholding information or trying to manipulate information for their benefit.

Key changes made by HELP to prepare for the NDIS were to clarify with service users to adapt service times, ratios and locations to meet service users needs and the benefits of the new funding model.

Barriers that remain in the scheme are constant changes in pricing which leads to a burden of administration for providers to keep up with service agreements and scheduled bookings.

2. Supply of services and supports.

**Response:** The most important factors that influence HELP's decision to supply in the NDIS market are pricing, customer numbers and staffing availability

Whilst there is some data available to inform this, it is limited in its practical application. NDIS customers are learning how to make more informed choice about how and where to receive their supports. We are seeing many who are still seeking out traditional supports within traditional hours which is causing difficulties, as we are trying to move to a more modern support environment. New support times and activities are easily accommodated with the available staffing.

Individuals that self manage their plans are often more informed about the types of supports they can purchase and how that can benefit the person supported. This does come at a cost to providers, as the price for plan management does not often cover the amount of time supporting people through this. Some people choose self managed or plan managed supports as a way of saving money at the expense of providers administration time supporting them.

Areas of uncertainty that still exist for us are the viability of supports in different areas such as group supports where we have large investment in infrastructure and the funding is not there to support the ongoing delivery of supports.

3. Concentration

**Response:** The key barriers to expansion are lack of workforce to provide supports.

4. Thin Markets

**Response:** Currently there is greater demand for SIL than there is supply of appropriate housing and staff. The main barriers to people utilising their plans is availability of staff to support people. Cancellation of supports which leads to accumulation of funds is also a barrier to utilisation rates.

5. Regulation issues in the NDIS market

**Response:** Resources to assist compliance are developed alongside changes in compliance expectations rather than prior to expectations changing. This creates difficulty for providers to stay in front of compliance and regulation expectations. There is difficulty for smaller providers to stay compliant, and challenges for larger providers to adapt existing compliance structures to the new model. This is administratively burdensome and costly.

Whilst the NDIS model invigorates creativity for supports based on the needs of the customers there is restriction in what can be provided by the regulatory aspect of invoicing on a particular line item for supports and the need to have that linked to payment.

6. Regulation of prices

**Response:** Prices are not consistently sufficient for efficient service delivery. There are some services which are adequately priced, whilst some are not. This has the consequence of forcing service providers to choose which services they will offer based on pricing at the risk of reducing services in the market.

7. Regulation of quality

**Response:** Provider regulation provides an overarching framework for quality and compliance. The transition from the previous quality system and the NDIS quality system is costly and time consuming for providers. The Quality and Safeguards commission is very responsive and helpful in supporting providers to comply with the regulations

8. Working in the NDIS market.

**Response:** The NDIS has impact on our recruitment to the extent that we are needing to match skills of staff to needs of the customer. This enables very personalised support, but doesn't always enable timely recruitment. There is a shortage of support staff in the market at the moment which makes recruitment difficult. The barriers to workforce development are time and finances. The NDIS funding does not provide for training time for staff, and the current training offered to support staff does not equip them sufficiently for the needs of the customers they are often supporting. The labour market is such that retention of staff is becoming more and more difficult.