



Podcast 1 – National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Tom: Welcome to Are You On Board! You're listening to a Vicsport podcast about helping our sport industry to be more inclusive. Support comes from the state government of Victoria.

Sam: Hi, I'm Sam Bramham. I'm a Paralympic gold medalist, ambassador for disability sport and recreation, and a motivational speaker. I'm also currently working with the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Today I'm speaking with Maryanne Diamond, branch manager engagement NDIS. She's here to chat with me about how sports organisations can tap into the NDIS to get better at including people with disability.

Maryanne: Thanks Sam. Good to be here.

(0:38) Sam: So Maryanne to start can you talk us through what the NDIS is and why it was set up?

(0:40) Maryanne: So traditionally disability supports have been provided to organisations to determine what people with disabilities need and provide those services so we would refer to that as block funding and it was run by state government. And it was a crisis driven system some people were supported but many were not. And people with disabilities pretty well said to governments said we need to change, we need to be in charge of our own lives. We know what we need, we know what is best for us, rather than service providers telling us. So there was a campaign over a number of years to have the whole way government provided for supports for people with disabilities to change so that persons with disabilities became in charge of their own lives. So through a fair bit of campaigning, through the Every Australian Counts Campaign and a whole lot of other lobbying, a productivity commission report was drafted and submitted to government in 2011, which recommended the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. So that's kind of a bit about the history and what the Scheme does it's about the individual so recognising that everyone with a disability, just like everyone in the community, is different. So for example, I'm a blind person, not all blind people need the same supports and services, we're all different, we're not a homogenous group. So it is about the person setting their own goals and having a conversation with the NDIA, which is the agency in place to deliver the scheme, about what supports they might need to achieve those goals. So it is a really different way of thinking and for people with disabilities, their families and careers, it is a huge change because people who have traditionally not been able to make up their own aspirations, goals, decisions, you don't just suddenly become able to do it so it is a huge change for the sector, for providers of supports. You can imagine all these organisations used to exist by getting guaranteed block funding to deliver a service, many of them great services, not a problem with that, but suddenly now they're going to have consumers buying their services so they may or may not choose to go to where they used to receive their services. So it's a very different world.

(2:55) Sam: So participant choice and control is something that I'm hearing quite strongly. What sort of choice and control, your speaking about goals and aspirations, can you elaborate a little bit more about what you meant by that?

VICSPORT

(3:05) Maryanne: Yeah so for some people a goal might be to be able to live independently in their community, it might be "I want a job," and then you might think about what you might need to achieve those things along the way. For example some people if it was to get a job they might need some training, they may need some support to get to and from home to a job and so on. So in a way it depends on what your goals are, but it is about people being able to participate in the community. A community that is accessible to everybody.

(3:40) Sam: Okay. Well getting to a key question, Maryanne, how does the funding work? That is what does the NDIS pay for and not pay for?

(3:46) Maryanne: Okay well it is a very individual thing. So depending, as I said, on the goals people set, for example, someone might get a wheelchair covered under the NDIS and that wheelchair could help them to play sport, help them get to school, to work, whatever. It doesn't provide supports for what we might call mainstream services, education, health, they have interfaces with those services, but under the National Disability Strategy, which is the overarching policy framework that all governments have signed up to, all of those mainstream services have to be made available to everybody, including people with disabilities. So if you take, for example, someone that might go to school it is the education department in the states responsibility to provide the education to that person, but an NDIS package may include support to get that child ready, a wheelchair or a transport to and from school. So it's the support that go alongside the mainstreams. So it's hard to say there's a big long list and you tick a box or you don't tick a box. There are some things that are covered and other things that are a bit of a judgement and some things that are not clearly because they are covered somewhere else.

(5:07) Sam: So Maryanne just to go back to what is reasonable and necessary. What can a participant actually have funded under the NDIS, for example, does it pay for their swimming fees, can it pay for their club membership fees, what's a reasonable expectation?

(5:19) Maryanne: So the NDIS doesn't pay membership fees for sporting clubs. Able body people pay memberships for sporting clubs. We would expect people with disability, who to join that sporting club, to pay the membership themselves, but in saying that we may fund supports to assist people in getting into their club. Like for example, a physio might come with the person to the sporting club just to, on the first couple of visits maybe, to assist for them to integrate into the sporting club. It would vary person to person. So not membership, not traditional things that everyone would pay for, but where there is an additional support required to assist and it might be transport to get to the sporting club, as I said it might be short term physio to assist. But that would be what we would expect because what we really want is sporting clubs to be accessible and inclusive of everybody.

(6:12) Sam: And how can the National Disability Insurance Scheme assist with building a participants capacity through sport?

(6:18) Maryanne: So again sporting clubs becoming accessible and inclusive is the key. It seems to be a theme of mine is that if they are then people will be attracted to them. And then if people have goals and in their plans and supports access to sport and participation in sport it will be an individual basis as to what will be covered. For example if for someone recreation or sport is a big thing in someone's life we would probably fund the equipment, whether it be a wheelchair, artificial limbs, whether it be technology, whatever it is for that person to be able to build their capacity and take their place in the



community, just as everyone else does. But again it is an individual case by case basis as to what that would cover.

(7:04) Sam: Let's just go back to the goals and aspiration, if a person with a disability wants to play a sport, how can the National Disability Insurance Scheme assist their participation?

(7:14) Maryanne: So I suppose I would start by saying it is important that sporting clubs think about making their clubs accessible to people. As every support and services in their community because after all we all live in the same communities and we want people to be able to participate where they choose. And if sporting clubs are inclusive and accessible then people who get NDIS packages who do want to play sport they may get assistance to go and from the sporting arena, they're going to choose you. That's, I guess, the key thing.

(7:51) Sam: So going to people who work in the sports organisations as you mentioned before. How can the NDIS help them provide more participation opportunities for people with disability within the sport organisation?

(8:01) Maryanne: Okay so as I said I guess it's about how you make your sport organisations more accessible. And I can give you an example of a more recent one where Deakin University has worked in partnership with the AFL on Auskick to ensure that Auskick became accessible to all children, including children with disabilities. That project or partnership was funded under our information linkages and capacity building program and that program is not only for participants but all people with disabilities to interact with the community, build capacity of people with disabilities to have the confidence and ability to interact with community and for organisations to do it. So this is a way for us funding a really great idea that makes Auskick accessible to all children so we think that's another option. We have grant rounds we're just rolling out now so starting this year so one way sporting clubs might think about is how that looking at our website ILC funding grants what's required what's not, what's suitable what's not. And think about it. But I come back to thinking about accessibility in general. Not everyone who has a disability in Australia, which is about 4 million people, are going to have NDIS packages. It's estimated that at full scheme roll out in 2020 there will be about 475,000 people who will receive a package. So that's an awful lot short of the number of people living with a disability.

(9:38) Sam: You probably got many sport organisations putting their hand up ready for help. To finish our chat today, how would you advise those organisations to start the ball rolling?

(9:45) Maryanne: I guess for me as I mentioned before I think, think about inclusiveness. What does accessibility and inclusiveness mean for everyone in the community to join your sporting club? Think about initiatives and look at our information linkages, capacity building part of our webpage to see if you can glean from ideas that others have done that might assist. But really if you become an accessible and inclusive sporting club people with disabilities will choose to come to you and I think that's a huge advantage for both the community, sporting club, and people with disabilities.

Sam: Thank you so much for chatting with me today Maryanne. I hope the NDIS and Victoria sports associations can successfully make the most out of this opportunity to improve disability inclusion. Thank you very much.

Maryanne: Thanks Sam. Good to talk.



Tom: Thank you for listening to the Are You On Board podcast by Vicsport, supported by the State Government of Victoria. For more episodes please visit vicsport.com.au and follow the links to the Are You On Board page.

Key Messages:

1. Why was the NDIS needed and what do they do?

- Traditionally, disability supports were given through block funding, which was run by state government and the organisations receiving block funding were the ones that decided what services people with disabilities needed. Because everyone with a disability is different, this was a flawed system because it was not individualised to meet specific needs. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was developed in order to target specific people's needs and make sure that people with disabilities were getting exactly what they needed. **(0:38)**

2. What does it mean for someone with a disability to have choice and control?

- People with disabilities are now asked to think about their goals and aspirations and from those goals they can receive support. For example, if someone with a disability wanted to get a job, they may need training and they may need assistance to get to and from that job. That is where the NDIS would help to provide support. **(2:55)**

3. How does funding work?

- Getting funding is a very individualised process. The NDIS does not provide mainstream services such as education and health related services. Those mainstream services are provided for everyone including people with disabilities. The NDIS will, however, give support such as wheelchairs and transport to and from school. With that being said, the NDIS also does not pay membership fees for people with disabilities to participate in sport. It does provide funding if the person with a disability requires extra support such as a physio. **(3:40)**

4. How does the NDIS assist with building participant's capacity through sport?

- It's important that clubs are becoming more inclusive and accessible for people with a disability. Once the clubs are accessible and welcoming then the NDIS can provide any additional support that is needed and participation rates can increase. **(6:12)**