



Women
With
Disabilities
Australia
(WWDA)

New WWDA analysis warns NDIS Bill will deepen Scheme's gender gap

Women With Disabilities Australia will tell a Senate inquiry women are already missing out on the NDIS, and the Bill risks making it worse.

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) will tell a Senate inquiry that the Government's NDIS Reform Bill could make existing inequalities in the Scheme worse, with women making up half of disabled Australians but only around a third of NDIS participants.

WWDA says the national debate has focused heavily on NDIS savings and who may lose support, but not enough on who is already being left out, and who will be expected to fill the gaps if supports are reduced.

WWDA CEO Sophie Cusworth said women, girls and gender-diverse people with disability are already facing barriers in the NDIS.

"Women are already under-represented in the NDIS. They already face barriers proving eligibility and getting access. This Bill risks making those inequalities worse." Ms Cusworth said.

WWDA will give evidence to the Senate inquiry into the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2026* one week before the Committee is due to report.

"This Bill would give Government broad powers to tighten access, reduce supports, cap funding and shift people away from the Scheme before new safeguards have been designed," Ms Cusworth said.

"That is deeply concerning when there is still no alternative disability support system for people to rely on."

WWDA has identified three immediate risks:

- **people may lose essential support when there is nowhere else to go;**
- **costs, care and risk may be pushed onto people with disability and their families, especially women; and**
- **future rules and assessment tools may repeat the same bias that already locks many women out of support.**

WWDA is also warning the Bill could create a "pay-to-prove" barrier, where people are expected to show they have tried all available treatment before they can access disability support.

Ms Cusworth said there is still no clear answer for people who cannot afford to self-fund treatment before seeking NDIS support.

“No one has answered the basic question: what happens when people cannot afford to exhaust every treatment option?”

“The logic seems to be that people should come back only after need has increased or health and wellbeing has deteriorated, which is not fair and is not good policy,” Ms Cusworth said.

WWDA goes on to highlight that the reforms will not lessen people’s need for support, they will simply shift that support off the NDIS and onto others – mainly women.

“This Bill risks shifting support needs onto families, informal care arrangements and crisis systems, at a time when those arrangements are not safe, reliable or freely available,” Ms Cusworth said.

These reduced supports could also increase isolation and safety risks for women with disability, including women experiencing violence, abuse or neglect.

“For women with disability, the risk is not only being excluded from the NDIS. The risk is deeper harm, more isolation, and less access to safety and support,” Ms Cusworth said.

WWDA says the Bill must not proceed until the Government publicly shows how the changes will affect women, girls and gender-diverse people with disability, who could lose supports, where people are meant to go, and how people will access those essential supports they need.

“Reforms of this scale must be designed with our community, not pushed through before the risks are understood,” Ms Cusworth said.

The Senate inquiry is due to report on 16 June.

ENDS