



RACGP

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the
National Disability Insurance Scheme – ICT
contracts and systems inquiry.

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Introduction

The RACGP is Australia's largest professional general practice organisation representing over 38,000 members working in or towards a career in general practice. The RACGP has a strong history of being at the forefront of innovations in the health sector and is ideally placed to guide governments and other stakeholders to ensure they are informed of what is reasonable, workable and useful for general practitioners in Australia when implementing eHealth technologies.

The RACGP welcomes the opportunity to provide written comment to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) ICT and Systems inquiry.

Responses to terms of reference:

The RACGP understands the MyPlace portal is a secure website for NDIS participants to view their plan, payments and to manage services from various providers.

Currently the role of general practitioners and other healthcare providers is to provide evidence to support requests to access the NDIS by:

- completing the NDIS Supporting Evidence Form or sections of the Access Request Form (ARF)
- documenting that the person has or is likely to have a permanent disability
- providing copies of reports or assessments relevant to the diagnosis that outline the extent of the functional impact of the disability

The ARF form is not available as an online form and supporting documentation is provided in hard copy to the NDIS applicant to be submitted with their application. GPs are not provided with a copy of a patient's NDIS plan and must request this from the patient.

The inefficiencies of these current processes create a heavy burden on GPs, diverting their time away from providing essential medical care for patients. Secure electronic communication should be the preferred and default method of communication of all health services and government agencies communicating with general practice regarding patients, including the NDIS.

Due to the lack of electronic communication offered by the NDIS general practices are required to manually transfer information from their clinical and administrative systems into paper based forms which are given to the patient to send with their application. Information leaving general practice via paper forms requires significant manual processing.

The NDIS plan supplied to general practice by patients in a hardcopy format must be manually scanned and added to the patient's clinical record. Most organisations fail to consider the implications and costs for General Practice's to manage information transfers safely, reliably and efficiently

Documents received by general practice provide the most clinical value when they can be searched and interrogated by general practice clinical software. Reports which are scanned into clinical records and saved as an image are not easily searchable.

The RACGP supports the following principles for communication between general practice and other healthcare agencies including the NDIS:

- all electronic communications templates and systems should use existing data and information from general practice clinical information systems to pre-populate documents and forms
- all communications should be created and sent from within the general practice's electronic clinical software system and automatically received into the local patient electronic health record via the clinical software system inbox
- all electronic communications to external healthcare providers and agencies should be sent securely using secure messaging to align with best practice data privacy handling principles to protect patient privacy and confidentiality.

The RACGP would be happy to work with the NDIS to find workable solutions to make the current system easier for general practices and GPs to interact with on behalf of their patients.