



“  
Let’s talk about  
**work**”

**This booklet covers:**

- planning for employment
- exploring your employment goals
- planning for when you leave school
- finding employment providers.



# Please note: **COVID-19**

## **The NDIA has made some changes to the way we do things during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Some of the things in this booklet might be slightly different to how you might experience your NDIS journey now.

Some of the changes we have made include:

- You can get the access request form, and supportive evidence form online- so you do not have to go to your local NDIS office to apply.
- Your meetings with your Local Area Coordinator, Early Childhood Early Intervention Coordinator or the NDIA be held over the phone where possible. This includes planning and plan review meetings.
- The NDIA will contact you by phone to undertake your plan review and will discuss the option of having your plan in place for 24 months.
- You don't need to do anything if your plan is going to expire, it will be automatically extended for 12 months if we haven't been able to complete a plan review.
- Your plan is now more flexible. We have broadened our approach for low cost AT items and there's new line items added for supported independent living.

# How to use this booklet

The purpose of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is to support people with disability to achieve their goals, help them realise their full potential and exercise choice and control over their lives. Everyone has diverse skills, talents, knowledge and attributes. It is important you have the right support to achieve your work or career goals.

The NDIS would like to talk with you about your interest in employment and if you have an employment or career goal.

This booklet will:

- help you prepare for your planning conversation with the NDIS
- help you respond to questions when you meet your **Local Area Coordinator (LAC), National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Planner or Support Coordinator**
- once completed, inform your NDIS representative so that together we can explore ways you can develop your work skills.

**NDIS key words:** Some words we use to talk about the NDIS might be new to you, so we explain them along the way. These words are in **purple** text.

**Examples:** In the book are written in **red** text and start with the words 'For example'.

It is important to complete this booklet, even if you are unsure about work. The information you share will help the NDIS understand more about the work you are already doing, your interest in work, any employment goals you have and what supports you might need.

Please bring this booklet to your NDIS meetings and if you need help to complete it, ask your LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator to guide you.

You should complete this booklet in conjunction with other NDIS resources available at [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au):

- **Booklet 1: Understanding the NDIS**
- **Booklet 2: Planning**
- **Booklet 3: Using your NDIS plan.**

Your LAC or Support Coordinator will guide you in using these booklets. You may have recorded their contact details in **Booklet 2: Planning**.

These booklets are available in different formats and in other languages. Visit [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au) or call **1800 800 110** to request a copy.

## NDIS key words:

### Local Area Coordinator (LAC)

A LAC is employed by a community-based partner organisation to help people understand and access the NDIS. They work with NDIS participants to develop and use their NDIS plan.

### NDIA Planner

An NDIA Planner is an NDIA employee. If a participant lives in an area where there are no LACs, they might work with an NDIA Planner to create their NDIS plan.

### Support Coordinator

A Support Coordinator will help a participant to understand and use NDIS funded supports in their plan to work towards reaching their goals. They also help to build skills so the participant can use their plan more independently and connect with community supports and services. If a participant lives in an area where there are no LACs, or they have complex needs, their NDIS plan may include funding for a Support Coordinator. Note: a Support Coordinator does not write NDIS plans.



## How the NDIS can help with employment

You might have heard people talk about the NDIS improving opportunities for ‘economic participation’. This means the NDIS has a key role in helping you think about work. We can help you understand the supports required to help you find and keep a job or do other things, like **volunteering**.

The NDIS is here to help you plan and set goals so you can start your employment journey. Support from the NDIS may include funding in your plan, or information about **other government services**, supports and **mainstream** employment funding available to you. This includes information about:

- **Disability Employment Services (DES)**
- community programs
- volunteering opportunities.

The NDIS may fund reasonable and necessary employment supports, which can be used in a wide range of workplaces, including private and government employers, **social enterprises**, **micro-businesses**, **self-employment** or an **Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE)**.

Supports include:

- capacity building supports to help you do things like learn new skills, increase your capability and independence at work.
- ongoing, on-the-job support where you need daily help to complete your work tasks and keep your job.
- personal care at work, for example help with eating meals.
- **School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES)** and other individual and group based supports to achieve your employment goals. Supports can help you learn more about your work skills and develop your confidence to begin job seeking. For example, you might like to ‘try and test’ work, with supports in place, to identify your work skills, learn how to communicate with others at work, or better understand what an employer might expect from you. You might also like to become more independent at work or progress your career goals.

Other NDIS funding, for example community participation supports, can also be used to build skills and take important steps to employment. A community participation provider could help you learn how to catch public transport, meet new people or manage your money. Getting out into the community is a great way to make friends and develop social skills. Gaining confidence in these areas might be your first step in the employment journey.

## NDIS key words:

### Mainstream or other government services

Mainstream or other government services are the government systems providing services to the Australian public, such as health, mental health, education, justice, housing, child protection and employment. The NDIS funds some supports in these areas where they are part of the participant’s daily life and result directly from the participant’s disability.

### Disability Employment Services (DES)

DES are funded by the Government to help people with disability find and keep a job. Visit the Job Access website for more information about DES at [jobaccess.gov.au](http://jobaccess.gov.au).

### Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs)

ADEs are not-for-profit organisations. They offer a wide range of occupations and training in industries ranging from packaging and printing to gardening and furniture assembly. ADEs can provide ongoing employment or they can act as a stepping stone, enabling people with disability to gain the skills and confidence they need to try other forms of employment.

### Volunteering

Volunteering is unpaid work. It can be a great first step to getting paid work. Being a volunteer has lots of benefits. It can help you gain work experience in the field you are interested in and increase your work skills and general wellbeing. As well as having a positive impact on your community, volunteering can build important personal and work relationships. Talk to your LAC about opportunities to volunteer in your area.

### Social enterprises

Social enterprises (or social traders) are businesses that are dedicated to addressing social problems, improving communities, providing people access to employment and training, or helping the environment. Social enterprises receive most of their income from trade, not donations or grants.

### Micro-businesses

Micro-businesses are generally small businesses run by an individual rather than a corporation or larger company. They usually employ between one and four people. This could include a family run business.

### School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES)

A SLES is an NDIS support available to students leaving secondary school that helps them on a pathway to employment.

### Self-employment

Self-employment is where you work for yourself and not a company or business. You earn your income directly from your own business, trade or profession. For example, you may have your own gardening/lawn mowing business, or you may provide bookkeeping services to a number of small businesses.

# Planning for employment

Your planning or plan review meeting, is an opportunity to discuss your thoughts about work. If you already have an employment goal you can discuss the types of support you need.

## Checklist

Use this checklist before your planning or plan review meeting to make sure you have prepared all the information you need. Before your planning meeting, complete this booklet on your own or with someone's help—this might be your family, LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator.

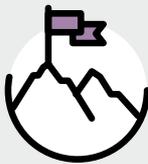
- Collect information, such as letters or agreements, about other employment supports you currently receive. **For example, you may have one with DES providers, an ADE, a volunteering arrangement, or part-time work.**
- Bring any reports or assessments, such as school reports or work assessments. If you are leaving school, remember to collect all of your information before you finish school.
- Bring the following school documentation along to your NDIS planning meeting:



school reports



work experience reports



career transition plans



discovery

## NDIS key words:

### Career transition plans

Career transition plans are created at school, to define a student's learning goals and the work experience opportunities they might pursue. Depending on what state you live in, career transition plans may be called something different.

### Discovery

Discovery is a process that outlines the work environment that best suits the person. Sometimes it can be called a vocational profile.

## Adam's Story

**Adam is from New South Wales and lost his job after 25 years. He has since found a new job at a fast food restaurant and is a lot happier in himself.**

"What I like best about working is the staff, they are so friendly and sometimes the customers are very nice people to talk to," said Adam.

"The NDIS has improved my life so much. I didn't know there were options out there".

"Since Adam received his NDIS plan, I've witnessed a huge transformation from a man who had lost the job he had worked in for 25 years and didn't know what to do with his days, to a man who's got a job, being out there in the community."

**Tanya, Adam's LAC**



## Your employment journey

This section is for sharing information about where you are in your journey towards employment.

### If you are already working or volunteering

Tell us about what you do.

- How many days per week do you work or volunteer and how many hours do you work each day?
- Where are you working? Would you like to keep working there? Or would you like support to try something different?
- Is it paid or unpaid work?
- Would you like to increase your hours?
- What sort of supports help you at work? Do you have a support worker/co-worker helping you some of the time, all of the time or not at all?
- Would you like to find new opportunities?

Use the text box below to make any notes or list questions.

**For example, I am volunteering at a clothes shop for three hours each Monday. I don't get paid at the moment but I would like to do some more hours and get paid.**

**I work in an ADE three days a week and I would like to try working somewhere else, one day a week.**

### If you are ready to look for work or start volunteering

Tell us about what you would like to do.

- What sort of work or volunteering would you like to do?
- Is there a volunteer job you would like to try before applying for a paid job?
- Is someone already helping you, for example, your family, a friend, DES provider or ADE?

Use the text box below to make any notes or list questions.

**For example, I would like to volunteer at my local library. I love books so it is ok if I don't get paid at the start, but one day I would like to become a librarian.**

**I have always loved to bake cakes and cookies. One of my goals is to one day work in a bakery.**

## **If you are not quite ready to look for work but want to learn more about what work might be right for you**

Planning to work can feel like a big step. Your LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator can help you think about some steps towards working. For example, you might use a part of your NDIS funding to do some work experience or volunteer work to find out what you enjoy and what skills you have.

Answering the questions in the rest of this booklet will help your LAC or NDIS Planner understand your goals, experience and the supports you might need to take the first steps toward working.

## **Getting ready to discuss employment**

Your planning or plan review meeting is between you, your LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator, and your nominee or third party decision maker, a family member or carer, if you want them there. It is an opportunity to talk about work and new or existing employment goals. It is also a good chance to talk about any barriers you have faced with work or looking for work, or why you think you have not been able to find work in the past.

Your LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator will work through this booklet with you and discuss what you have recorded.

**Fill this section out before your planning or plan review meeting.**

## **If you haven't thought about getting a job, can you tell us why?**

**For example, I have not thought about work because I am not sure if I can work without a lot of help.**

**I have thought about work, but I don't know if there is anything I would be good at and it just seems too hard because of my disability.**

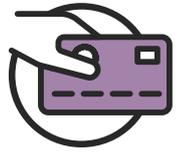
## **Do you have any specific work skills, qualifications or work experience?**

- Have you done any courses?
- What level of education have you completed?
- If you have volunteered in the past, what did you do?

**For example, I did two weeks work experience at a panel beating business, when I was at school. I don't have any qualifications but I am really good at working on cars.**

## Do you look after your own money?

When you start earning money, your LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator may be able to talk to you about building skills to manage your money.



- Do you have any financial or money saving goals that you would like to achieve?

**For example, my carer helps me manage my money so I don't spend too much at once. But I have my own bank account and bank card where I can withdraw money out of my account.**

### Tiana's Story

**Tiana, now 21, was diagnosed with autism at the age of five. Tiana and her family have experienced many challenges, but since accessing the NDIS, Tiana has been getting the supports she needs to achieve her employment goals.**

Through accessing supports, Tiana continues to make significant progress. Finding employment was something Tiana's mother, Marilyn, thought might never be possible, but Tiana is now working two days a week at a primary school.

“It's been the best thing, she gets everything ready the night before and is up early ready to go. When I pick her up she's in a happy mood.”

**Marilyn, Tiana's Mum**



## What tasks do you do well? What do you love doing?

Tell us what you are already good at and if you need some help doing these things.

- Do you have any jobs you're responsible for at home?
- Are you involved in any sports, social activities or programs?

**For example, I am really good at reading but not out loud. I sometimes need help to talk to people I don't know. I love mowing the lawn and some people in my street pay me because they say I do a great job.**

## What transport do you use to get around?

- Can you drive a car?
- Do you use public transport?
- Do you have the right equipment to help you catch transport safely?



**For example, I can catch the bus into town and to my Grandad's house. I did have a card that I carried in my wallet that told me the right stop to get off, but I don't need the card anymore.**

# Exploring your employment goals

One of our key aspirations is to support you to achieve more independence, and social and economic participation. The NDIS can do this by giving you an NDIS plan and supporting you to achieve your employment goals.

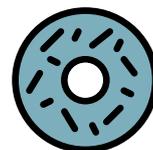
## Setting an employment goal

Here are some examples of employment goals and how NDIS participants can use their funding to help achieve them.

### Akari's goal:

**“This year, I'd like to explore what type of jobs might best suit me and find work.”**

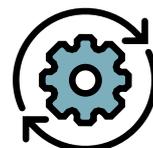
Akari used some SLES funding in her NDIS plan to gain supported work experience in a supermarket. She soon discovered she loved working in the bakery section and her support worker is developing her skills to work more independently. When Akari is ready, she will start looking for work with the help of DES.



### Adrian's goal:

**“I want to get a part-time job by the end of the year.”**

Adrian wanted a job but was not sure if he was ready, or what an employer might expect of him. Adrian decided he would like to start work at an ADE to help him learn more about his skills and working. An ADE might be the right place for him to learn about his skills and interests as they are disability confident employers and understand the support Adrian needs to explore working.



### Mohammed's goal:

**“During the next 12 months, I want to do some volunteer work with animals.”**

Mohammed used some of his Core Supports budget to pay for a support worker to help him in his volunteer duties at the vet in his town. The owner of the vet practice said Mohammed kept the place spotless and did a very reliable stocktake. Mohammed is now getting paid work at the vet one day per week and would like to increase to two days.



### Lachlan's goal:

**“During this plan period, I want to expand my skills so I can start looking for a new job.”**

For the last two years, Lachlan has worked part-time doing dishes at a café. His goal is to work full time and learn new skills so he can serve customers and handle money. Lachlan and his LAC had a great conversation about how he works independently, but he might need some help to develop his skills further. The LAC helps Lachlan find a training program that will assist him to take the next step in his career.



**If you have an employment goal, write it down here. Or, write down a goal that will help you decide if work is something you want to try.**

If you need some help with this, ask your LAC, NDIS Planner or Support Coordinator.

**For example, I would like to start my own dog walking business by the end of the year.**

**I am not sure about working but during the next 12 months, I would like to see what it is like to work and what skills I need.**

**Do you have some ideas about how the NDIS could help you achieve your goals?**

You may wish to come back to this question after completing the rest of the booklet.

**For example, I don't think I need much help at work. But I would like some help to get a better routine in my life.**

**I would like some help to explore some courses on dog grooming.**

## James' Story

**James, 24, has an intellectual disability and is described by his dad Ernie as a “lovely kid, with good morals.”**

Since joining the NDIS in early 2018, James' world has expanded. He didn't receive any support prior to becoming an NDIS participant. Now he has his forklift licence, and is working at an ADE. James also receives some support at home to help him build up his life skills, including things like cooking and budgeting.

Ernie's advice is simple, “Contact the local NDIS office”.

“In the past 12-18 months, he's changed a lot, he's opening up more than he ever has before, because he's going to work.”

**Ernie, James' Dad**



# Planning for when you leave school

You may have had lots of conversations at school about work. You may have even done some work experience at school and know what you would like to do.

School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) is an NDIS support available to students leaving secondary school that helps them on a pathway to employment. SLES is for students who may not be ready to start looking for a job right away or who need help to understand the right sort of job for them.

## How SLES works

SLES is funding that can be used to develop a strategy to help you build your skills and confidence in areas where you need help. SLES may be funded by the NDIS for up to two years.

SLES is intended to build your ability and confidence to work with DES. Each person's SLES supports will be different, however the following can often help build employment readiness:

- money handling skills
- time management skills
- communication skills
- discovery activities
- extended work experience
- learning how to take instruction at work
- travel skills.

## Daniel's Story

**Daniel's work placements began when his mum approached local businesses and started conversations about his employment goals.**

With SLES in his NDIS plan, Daniel has made great progress by participating in his community through work experience. Since using SLES supports, Daniel has won a Rotary 'Pride of Workmanship' Award.

“There are several barriers, including employer concerns relating to behaviour, training needs, insurance and policies. However, employers who have embraced SLES have said Daniel is a great team member and they have really enjoyed seeing him develop his workforce participation skills.”

**Annette, Daniel's Mum**



## Tips for choosing a SLES provider

- Think about what skills or experience you need to achieve your work goals.
- You can find a registered provider by searching the list of providers at [ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au) or talking with your LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator.
- Don't forget you are a paying customer—you get a say in who you choose and how your SLES supports are delivered to you.
- Remember you have the right to change providers if you are not happy.
- A lot of DES providers also offer SLES services. DES providers will have a STAR rating. A STAR rating is a measure of how good they are compared to other DES providers at helping people get jobs. Five stars is the best and one star isn't so good. This can also be useful to help you choose a SLES provider.

At the end of each NDIS plan you will have a plan review, to check how you are progressing towards your goals.

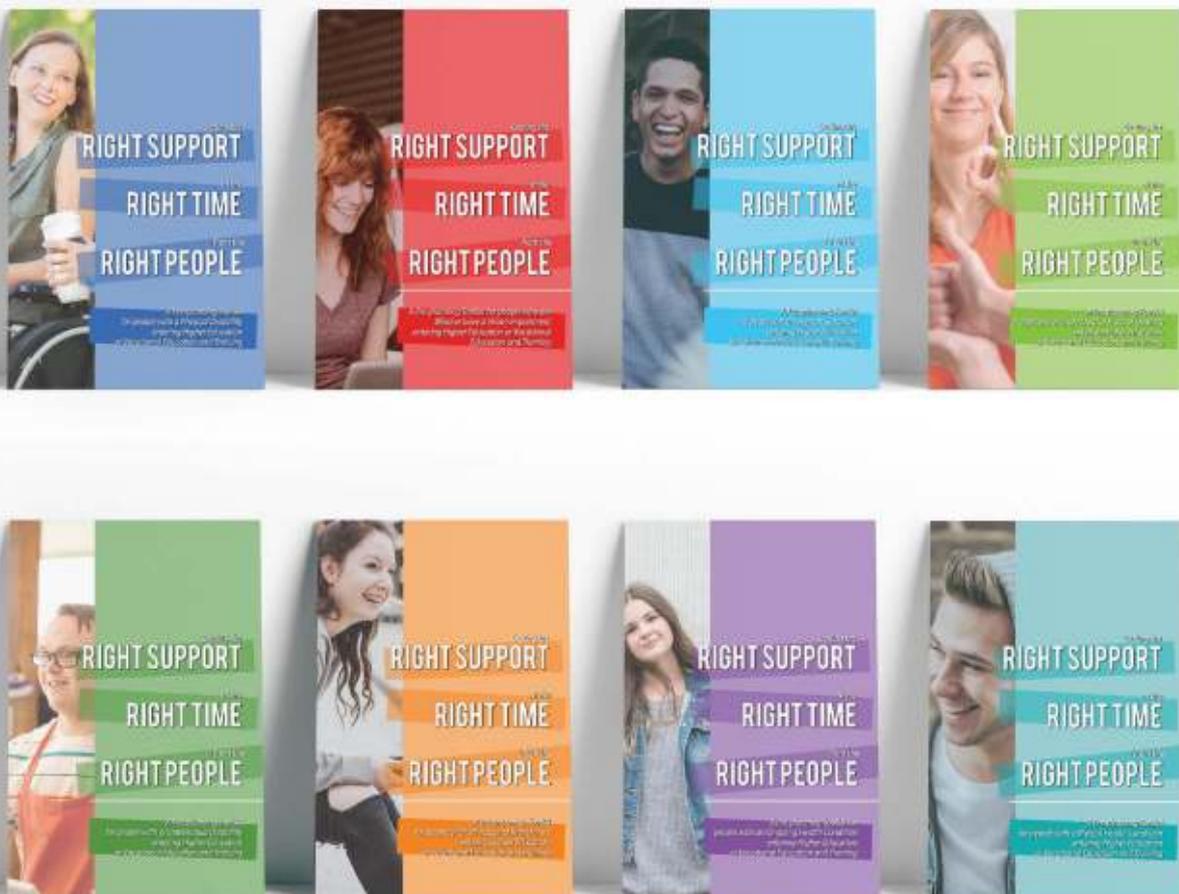
An LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator will discuss your progress and if you need additional SLES funding to achieve your goals.

For more information on SLES and to find lists of registered providers, visit [ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au).

## The National Disability Coordination Office Program pre-planning toolkit

The National Disability Coordination Office Program (NDCO) has developed an NDIS Pre-planning Toolkit for people with disability entering higher education or vocational education and training. These resources help to identify what supports you might need, who is responsible for providing them and how you can access them.

To access the Toolkit, go to the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on the Education and Training website at [adcet.edu.au](http://adcet.edu.au).



# Finding employment providers

If you have an NDIS plan, you can use the Provider Finder on the myplace portal to help find providers in your area. You can also visit [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au) to search for providers.

Once you have received your approved NDIS plan, it is time to choose the support and **service providers** to help you.

You might have some NDIS funded supports, or your LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator might have spoken to you about accessing your local DES.

To search for DES providers, visit the Job Access website at [jobaccess.gov.au](https://www.jobaccess.gov.au).

While DES is not funded by the NDIS, it will be written in your plan under the 'My services and community involvement' section, which is where non-NDIS supports are listed.

## Here are some questions you might like to ask an employment service provider before choosing to use their services:

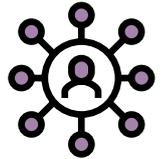
- What supports would you recommend based on the employment skills I need to develop?
- Do you provide one-on-one or group support?
- What qualifications do your staff have?
- What types of businesses or companies have you placed people in and what type of jobs are they doing?
- What range of jobs do you offer and would I have the opportunity to learn new skills while I work for you?
- How many of your participants have gone on to get a job?
- How long do most of your participants stay in a job for?



### NDIS key word:

#### Service provider

A service provider is a person, business or organisation that delivers funded services. Providers can include large companies, charities, small not-for-profits, sole traders, or any other type of business.



## What if I have a concern about NDIS supports or services?

If at any time you have a concern about your current NDIS supports or services, it is important you talk about it.

For more information about how to raise a concern or make a complaint visit [ndiscommission.gov.au](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)

## Ben's Story

**Ben is the front man of Ben & Co, a small business specialising in baked goods. Ben, aged 21, has Down syndrome and is someone who communicates without using words.**

Ben had helped out in the canteen at school. One afternoon Ben's mother Carolyn arrived to collect Ben and he greeted her with a batch of scones. "He was just beaming," said Carolyn.

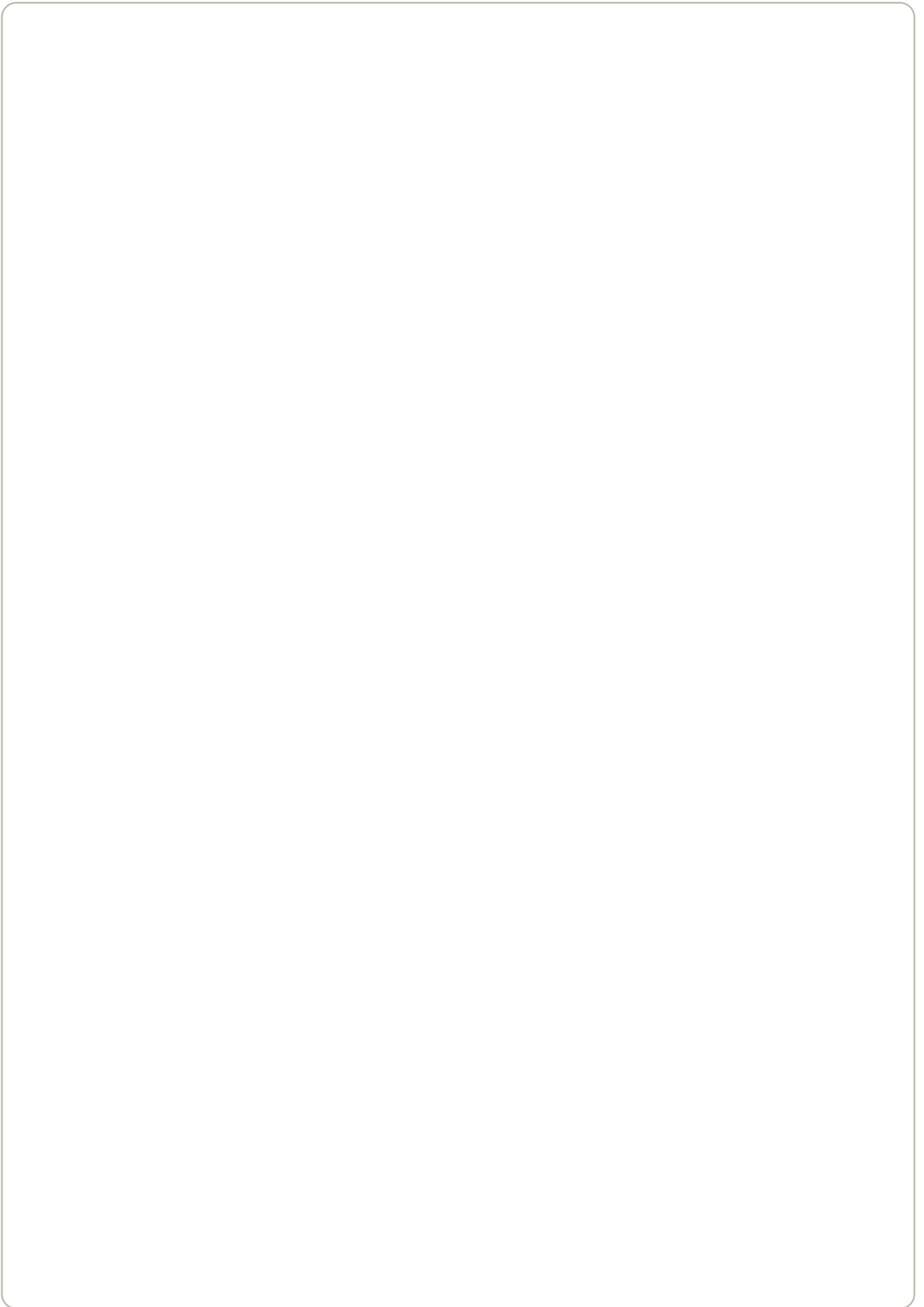
Ben did a cooking class and found his passion and now supplies two cafes with his baked goods; and his business is growing.

"Ben does things I never thought I'd see him do. Every day he'll show me something different. I want to get to the point where he doesn't need me out the back (of the café) with him. He's going to make me redundant".

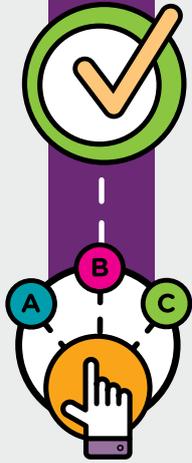
**Nandi, Ben's co-worker and support worker**



## Notes



# Congratulations



## You have taken steps to consider employment

- Your Planning meeting is an opportunity to talk about work with your LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator and think about your next steps.
- Your LAC, NDIA Planner or Support Coordinator will work with you to create an NDIS plan with the supports you need to achieve your employment goals.

## Start using your employment supports to access services

- Once you have your NDIS plan, you will be able to decide how to use your funding to achieve your employment goal.
- You can start asking providers about the services they offer and choose a provider that is going to help you achieve your goals.
- If you need help to start using your NDIS plan, read **Booklet 3: Using your NDIS Plan**. Your LAC, Support Coordinator or service provider may be able to help you get started.

## For more information about this booklet, please contact:

### National Disability Insurance Agency

 Telephone 1800 800 110

 Find us on Facebook/NDISAus

 Follow us on Twitter @NDIS

[ndis.gov.au](http://ndis.gov.au)

### For people who need help with English

 TIS: 131 450

### For people who are Deaf or hard of hearing

 TTY: 1800 555 677

 Speak and Listen: 1800 555 727

 Internet relay: National Relay Service  
[relayservice.gov.au](http://relayservice.gov.au)