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The complete guide to

SETTING UP, SURVIVING^{and} THRIVING

as an NDIS provider



Health Provider Assist



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The Opportunity Nobody Told You About

Something big is happening in Australia right now.

Nearly 771,000 people are living with a disability or developmental condition and relying on the NDIS to fund the support they need. That number grows by around 10,000 every single quarter. And the government has committed to spending \$49 billion on those supports over the next 12 months alone.

Behind every one of those dollars is a participant who needs someone like you.

Maybe you're a support worker who's thought about going out on your own. Maybe you've got a background in healthcare, community services, or just a deep passion for helping people. Maybe you've watched others build successful NDIS businesses and thought — I could do that.

You're right. You could.

But here's the thing nobody talks about: wanting to help isn't enough anymore.

The NDIS has changed. It's bigger, more regulated, and more scrutinised than at any point in its history. Eligibility rules have tightened. Funding structures have changed. The regulator is actively pursuing providers who get it wrong — reviewing tens of thousands of claims every year for integrity issues. And from July 2026, even more providers will be required to be fully registered.

The bar has been raised. And that's actually good news — if you're prepared.

Because the providers who are winning right now aren't just the most caring. They're the most prepared. They registered properly. They built compliant systems. They invested in the right tools. And they're growing while others struggle to keep up.

This guide is your shortcut to becoming one of them.

We've broken it into three parts that mirror the journey every successful provider goes through:

- Starting — how to cut through the complexity, register correctly, and build a foundation that holds up under scrutiny
- Surviving — how to stay compliant, manage your team, run your operations efficiently, and get paid on time
- Thriving — how to find participants, grow your reputation, and build a business that genuinely lasts

No fluff. No theory for theory's sake. Just the honest, practical stuff that makes the difference between providers who succeed and providers who don't.

Let's go.

Understanding the NDIS Landscape

Before you build anything, you need to understand what you're building in.

The NDIS isn't just a government program — it's an entire economy. Nearly \$50 billion flows through it every year, paid to 276,000+ active providers delivering support to Australians whose lives genuinely depend on it. It's the second largest government expenditure in Australia, behind only the aged pension.

And it's still growing.

How it actually works

The NDIS funds "reasonable and necessary" supports for Australians under 65 with a permanent and significant disability. Each participant receives an individual funding plan — essentially a budget they can use to engage providers for the supports they need.

Those plans are managed one of three ways:

- Agency-managed — the NDIA pays registered providers directly
- Plan-managed — a plan manager handles payments on the participant's behalf
- Self-managed — the participant controls their own funds and pays providers directly

As a registered provider, you can work with all three types. As an unregistered provider, you can only work with plan-managed and self-managed participants — which cuts you off from a significant chunk of the market.

Who the participants are

The data tells an interesting story. Of the 761,000+ active participants:

- Over 319,000 are children aged 0–14 — more than 40% of the entire Scheme
- Autism alone accounts for 324,000 participants — over 42% of all NDIS participants
- The fastest growing cohorts include children with developmental delay and adults aged 55–64

If you're planning to build an NDIS business, understanding where the demand actually sits will shape every decision you make — from which registration groups you choose to how you position your services.

A scheme in transition

Here's what every new provider needs to understand going into 2026: the NDIS is not the same scheme it was three years ago — and it won't be the same in three years' time.

The government is actively working to slow cost growth, tighten eligibility, and increase provider accountability.



From July 2026, mandatory registration is being extended to SIL providers and platform providers. A new planning framework is rolling out from mid-2026. And a separate \$4 billion "Thriving Kids" program will begin diverting some children away from the NDIS into state-run services from 2028.

None of this means the opportunity is gone. It means the rules are changing — and providers who understand those changes will have a serious advantage over those who don't.

Key Insight: The NDIS is not a "set and forget" opportunity. The most successful providers treat it as a dynamic business environment — staying informed, staying compliant, and adapting as the Scheme evolves. That's exactly what HPA is built to help you do.

Let's get the most common question out of the way first.

"Do I need a healthcare background to become an NDIS provider?"

No. You don't.

This surprises a lot of people — but it's one of the most important things to understand about the NDIS. While certain registration groups do require specific qualifications (specialist behaviour support, for example, requires a relevant allied health degree), the majority of NDIS support categories are open to people from all kinds of backgrounds.

Teachers. Community workers. Business owners. Parents of children with disability. People with lived experience of disability themselves. They're all building successful NDIS businesses right now.

What you do need is a genuine commitment to quality, the right documentation in place, and the willingness to meet the NDIS Practice Standards. The Scheme wants more good providers — not just more credentialled ones.

What can you actually register for?

The NDIS has 36 registration groups, each covering a different category of support — from daily personal activities and community participation, through to specialist accommodation, behaviour support, and early childhood intervention.

Before you apply, you need to choose which groups fit your business model. This decision matters more than most people realise. Choose the wrong groups and you'll either limit your earning potential or overcomplicate your audit unnecessarily.

Some of the most common starting points for new providers include:

- Daily Activities — personal care, household tasks, daily living support
- Community Participation — social, recreational, and community access support
- Support Coordination — helping participants manage and implement their plans
- Therapeutic Supports — occupational therapy, speech pathology, psychology (requires relevant qualifications)
- Early Childhood Supports — supporting children under 9 with developmental concerns

HPA tip

Choosing your registration groups is one of the single most important decisions you'll make — and one of the most common places new providers get it wrong. HPA's client managers work through this with every single client to make sure your selections match your actual business model from day one.





The honest picture

We're not going to tell you this is easy. It isn't.

The registration process takes time — typically several months from start to approval. There are upfront costs, including the auditing fee paid directly to your auditor. There's paperwork. There are standards to meet and maintain.

But here's the other side of that: the providers who go through this process properly are building something real. A registered NDIS business is a legitimate, regulated enterprise with access to billions of dollars in government-funded demand. That's not nothing — that's a genuine business with genuine value.

The question isn't really *"is this too hard?"* The question is: *"Is this worth it for me?"*

For thousands of providers across Australia, the answer has been a clear yes.

You've decided this is for you. Now let's talk about what actually happens.

The NDIS registration process has several distinct stages — and understanding them upfront will save you significant time, money, and stress. A lot of providers go in blind and pay for it later. You won't.

Here's the full picture.

Step 1 — Get your foundations right

Before you touch the NDIS Commission portal, you need three things sorted:

1. Your business structure confirmed (sole trader, company, or trust)
2. Your registration groups selected (see Chapter 2)
3. Your policies and procedures prepared for the groups you're applying under

Going in without these is the single biggest cause of delays, rejections, and unnecessary stress. The Commission portal will ask for all of it — so have it ready before you start.

Step 2 — Submit your application

Your application is lodged through the NDIS Commission's online portal. You'll provide your business details, the registration groups you're applying for, and evidence of your ability to meet the relevant Practice Standards.

This is also where you complete your self-assessment — rating yourself against each of the standards relevant to your registration groups. Your policies and procedures are the evidence that backs those ratings up.

Step 3 — The quality audit

This is the part most new providers are most nervous about — and with good reason. The audit is conducted by an independent, NDIS-approved auditing body. It's not run by HPA and it's not run by the NDIS Commission. It's a separate third party whose job is to assess whether your business genuinely meets the standards.

There are two types:

- Verification audit — for lower-risk support categories. Document-based, simpler process.
- Certification audit — for higher-risk categories like SIL, behaviour support, or early childhood. More comprehensive, involves interviews and site visits.

The auditing fee is paid directly to your auditor — separate from any registration consultancy fees. Budget for this as part of your startup costs. Fees vary depending on your auditor and the complexity of your registration.

Step 4 — Approval

Once your audit is complete and the Commission has assessed your application, your registration certificate is issued. Timeframes vary — the full process typically takes several months from start to finish, depending on your registration groups and how prepared your documentation is going in.

When approval comes through, you're officially a registered NDIS provider. But as you'll see in Part Two — that's when the real work begins.

What can go wrong

The most common reasons applications are delayed or fail:

- Poorly written or incomplete policies and procedures
- Wrong registration groups selected for the intended service model
- Underestimating audit requirements and arriving unprepared
- Missing documentation at key stages

Non-conformities raised during an audit must be addressed before registration can proceed. This can add weeks or months to the process if you're not prepared.

HPA tip

Health Provider Assist manages the entire registration process on your behalf — from documentation and self-assessment through to audit preparation and non-conformity corrections. Every client receives a dedicated client manager who guides them through every step. And if your application isn't approved, we'll give you your money back. No questions asked.



Nobody gets excited about policies and procedures.

But here's the truth: they are the single most important asset in your NDIS business — more important than your website, your marketing, or even your staff in the early days.

Without them, you can't register. Without good ones, you can't pass an audit. And without current ones, you can't stay registered.

Why they matter beyond compliance

Yes, policies and procedures are a compliance requirement. But the providers who treat them as just a box-ticking exercise are the ones who end up with non-conformities, failed audits, and scrambling staff who don't know what to do when something goes wrong.

Good documentation does three things:

1. Protects your participants — clear policies mean staff know exactly how to handle sensitive situations, challenging behaviours, incidents, and complaints
2. Protects your business — in the event of a dispute, complaint, or audit, your documentation is your defence
3. Scales your team — as you hire more support workers, your policies become the instruction manual that keeps quality consistent even when you're not in the room

What you actually need

The NDIS Practice Standards require registered providers to have documented policies and procedures across a range of areas. The exact requirements depend on your registration groups, but commonly include:

- Participant rights and responsibilities
- Incident management and reportable incidents
- Complaints handling
- Risk management
- Worker screening and human resources
- Support planning and service delivery
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Emergency and disaster management

For higher-risk registration groups — SIL, behaviour support, early childhood — the documentation requirements go deeper and are scrutinised more heavily at audit.

Build vs buy

Some providers write their own policies from scratch. It's possible — but it's time-consuming, and unless you're intimately familiar with the Practice Standards, it's easy to produce something that looks right but fails at audit.

The more practical route for most new providers is working with specialists who provide compliant, ready-to-use documentation as part of the registration process. Done properly, this gets you to audit faster and with far less risk.

Keeping them current

Here's something a lot of providers don't think about until it's too late: the NDIS changes. Regularly.

Policies that were compliant when you registered may not be compliant at your next audit if you haven't kept them updated. Staying on top of NDIS Commission guidance, legislative updates, and Practice Standard revisions is an ongoing responsibility — not a one-time job.

HPA tip

HPA provides complete, compliant policies and procedures for up to 36 NDIS service categories — written by compliance specialists and updated as the NDIS evolves. Your documentation doesn't just get you through your first audit. It's built to hold up through every audit after that.



Registration is the credential. But a business is what you're actually building.

Too many new providers laser-focus on getting registered and give almost no thought to what happens the day after approval comes through. They end up registered, excited — and completely unprepared to actually operate.

Don't be that provider.

Your business structure

Before anything else, get your structure right. Most new NDIS providers operate as one of three options:

- Sole trader — simplest to set up, but offers no separation between personal and business liability
- Company (Pty Ltd) — more setup cost and admin, but provides liability protection and looks more professional to larger clients and Support Coordinators
- Trust — can offer tax advantages but adds complexity; usually more relevant once the business is established

There's no single right answer — it depends on your situation, your risk tolerance, and your long-term plans. Talk to an accountant before you decide. The cost of getting this advice upfront is nothing compared to the cost of restructuring later.

Insurance

NDIS providers are required to hold appropriate insurance. At minimum:

- Professional indemnity insurance
- Public liability insurance

Some registration groups — particularly those involving physical supports or higher-risk environments may require additional coverage. Check the specific requirements for your registration groups before you apply, and make sure your policy limits are adequate.

Your finances

Open a dedicated business bank account before you start trading. Mixing personal and business finances is a headache that compounds fast. Set up basic bookkeeping from day one, whether that's through accounting software like Xero or MYOB, or working with a bookkeeper.

Cash flow is one of the biggest pain points for new NDIS providers. Agency-managed payments come through PRODA and can take time. Plan-managed payments depend on the plan manager's processing speed. Build a buffer before you launch, don't assume the money will arrive the week after you submit an invoice.

Your brand and digital presence

Here's where a lot of new providers underinvest, and it costs them clients.

In 2026, participants and their families Google everything. Support Coordinators who refer clients to you will check your website, your Google Business Profile, and your social media before they ever pick up the phone. If what they find looks amateur, they'll move on to someone else.

At minimum, before you start trading you need:

- A professional logo and consistent visual identity
- A clean, mobile-friendly website that clearly explains your services and how to contact you
- A verified Google Business Profile with accurate details and a link to your site
- Active Facebook and Instagram pages that show you're a real, operating business

This doesn't have to cost a fortune — but it does have to look professional.

HPA Business Package

For providers who want to launch looking the part from day one, HPA's full registration package includes everything you need to go from registered to market-ready: logo design, a custom 5-page website, email hosting, business cards, letterhead, flyer, workwear design, Facebook and Instagram page setup, Google My Business setup, and social media starter content.

It's a complete business-in-a-box — built specifically for new NDIS providers.

That wraps up Part One.

You now understand the landscape, know if it's right for you, understand the registration process, have your documentation sorted, and your business foundations in place.

In Part Two, we get into the reality of running the business day to day — staying compliant, managing your team, and making sure you get paid.

HPA tip

HPA provides complete, compliant policies and procedures for up to 36 NDIS service categories — written by compliance specialists and updated as the NDIS evolves. Your documentation doesn't just get you through your first audit. It's built to hold up through every audit after that.



Congratulations — you're registered.

Now the real work starts.

A lot of new providers make the mistake of thinking registration is the finish line. It isn't. It's the starting line. The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission doesn't just approve you and walk away — they continue to monitor, audit, and regulate every registered provider in the country. And in 2026, that scrutiny is more intense than it's ever been.

The audit cycle

Your registration isn't permanent. It expires — and renewing it requires going through another audit. The frequency depends on your registration type, but most providers face renewal within 1–3 years of their initial registration.

Here's what most people don't realise: your renewal audit is a snapshot of how you've been operating, not just how you look on the day. Auditors will ask for evidence of ongoing practices — incident reports, staff training records, complaint logs, policy updates. If you've been cutting corners since your last audit, it will show.

The providers who sail through renewals are the ones who never really stopped being audit-ready.

Incident management

This is non-negotiable. The NDIS has strict requirements around how providers manage and report incidents — and getting this wrong can put your registration at serious risk.

Some incidents must be reported to the NDIS Commission within specific timeframes. These are called reportable incidents, and they include things like:

- Unauthorised use of restrictive practices
- Abuse, neglect or exploitation of a participant
- Unexpected death of a participant
- Serious injury during service delivery

Every provider needs a clear, documented incident management process — and every staff member needs to know it. This isn't just about compliance. It's about protecting the people in your care.

Keeping up with a changing scheme

Here's a challenge that catches even experienced providers off guard: the NDIS changes constantly.

Practice standards get updated. Price guides change. New legislative requirements come into effect. Mandatory registration requirements expand — as they are doing from July 2026 for SIL and platform providers.

If you're not actively staying informed, you can find yourself non-compliant without realising it. And "I didn't know" is not a defence the Commission accepts.

The compliance burden is real — but it's manageable

None of this is designed to scare you off. Thousands of providers navigate NDIS compliance every day without it consuming their lives. The key is having the right systems in place so compliance is built into how you operate — not something you scramble for every time an audit looms.

HPA Portal

This is exactly what the HPA Portal is built for. Real-time compliance tracking, audit preparation tools, document management, and NADO — your 24/7 AI compliance assistant that answers your questions in plain English, any time of day or night. Whether you're checking if an incident needs to be reported or preparing for a renewal audit, NADO has you covered.

From \$99/month. **Try it free for 7 days.**

At some point, you can't do it alone.

Whether that's day one or day one hundred, the moment you bring on your first support worker is one of the most important milestones in your NDIS business. It's also one of the most common places things start to go wrong.

People management is hard. NDIS people management comes with an extra layer of regulatory requirements on top. Get it right and you scale with confidence. Get it wrong and you're facing non-conformities, compliance issues, and in serious cases — the loss of your registration.

Here's what you need to know.

Worker screening — no exceptions

Before any worker can provide supports to NDIS participants, they must hold a valid NDIS Worker Screening Check. This is not optional. It is not something you can do after they start. It is a hard requirement, and as the registered provider, it is your responsibility to verify and maintain records of every worker's screening status.

Depending on the state and the nature of the role, workers may also need:

- A Working With Children Check
- A current police check

Different states have different requirements — know what applies in yours before you hire.

Onboarding that actually works

Hiring someone is the easy part. Getting them to deliver consistent, high-quality support from day one is the challenge.

A proper onboarding process covers:

- Your organisation's values, policies, and procedures
- Participant rights and how to uphold them
- Incident reporting — what to report, how, and when
- Manual handling and physical safety (where relevant)
- The specific needs of the participants they'll be supporting

Don't rely on a one-hour induction and a handshake. The NDIS Practice Standards require workers to be appropriately trained and supported — and if something goes wrong with an undertrained staff member, it's your registration on the line.

Ongoing training

Training isn't a one-time event. It's an ongoing obligation.

Your workers need to stay current with your policies, with NDIS requirements, and with best practices in disability support. Completion certificates matter — they're evidence of compliance if an auditor asks. Tracking who has completed what, and when, becomes a real operational headache as your team grows.

Managing people at scale

The bigger your team gets, the more complex scheduling becomes. Shift changes, last-minute callouts, participant preferences, travel time — without a system, you'll spend hours every week just keeping the roster together.

The providers who scale successfully are the ones who put systems in place early — before they desperately need them.

HPA Portal

The HPA Portal includes a full library of preloaded staff training modules — covering incident management, participant rights, challenging behaviours, support coordination, SIL, and more. Each module is self-paced, with completion certificates issued automatically. Assign training with a click and track every team member's progress from your dashboard. No chasing. No spreadsheets. No excuses.

Your participants are the reason this business exists.

Everything else — the registration, the compliance, the team management — is infrastructure. It exists to support one thing: delivering great care to the people who depend on you.

But “great care” in the NDIS context isn’t just about being kind and showing up on time. It’s a structured, documented, regulated process. And getting it right protects everyone — your participants, your workers, and your business.

Service agreements — get them signed before you start

Every participant you support needs a signed service agreement in place before services begin. No exceptions.

A service agreement is a legal document that outlines:

- The supports you’ll deliver
- The rates you’ll charge
- The schedule of delivery
- The rights and responsibilities of both parties
- What happens if either party wants to end the arrangement

It’s your protection. It’s their protection. And in the event of a dispute or complaint, it’s the first document anyone will ask for.

Progress notes — not optional

Progress notes are one of the most common areas where providers fall short at audit — and one of the most preventable.

Every support session needs to be documented. What was delivered, how the participant responded, any observations worth noting, any incidents or concerns. Notes need to be:

- Written at the time of or shortly after the support
- Accurate and factual — not vague or generic
- Stored securely and accessible if requested

“We provide great care” means nothing without the documentation to back it up. Auditors don’t take your word for it. They read the notes.

Support planning

Beyond individual session notes, participants should have a support plan that reflects their NDIS goals and outlines how your services contribute to achieving them. This isn’t just good practice — it’s a compliance requirement for most registration groups.

Review support plans regularly. Participants' needs change. Their goals change. A plan that was relevant six months ago may not reflect where they are today.

Building relationships that last

Here's the thing the compliance manuals don't tell you: the providers who retain participants longest and generate the most referrals aren't necessarily the most polished operators. They're the ones who build genuine trust with participants and their families.

Return calls promptly. Be honest when something goes wrong. Involve participants in decisions about their own care. Listen more than you talk.

Word of mouth in the disability community is powerful and fast. One great experience becomes a referral. One bad experience becomes a warning shared in every Facebook group and Support Coordinator conversation in your area.

Your reputation is your most valuable asset. Guard it accordingly.

HPA Plus

HPA Plus gives you a single place to manage everything — participant profiles, service agreements, support plans, progress notes, and communication history. All digital. All organised. All accessible from any device. No more lost notes, no more paper files, no more scrambling before an audit. Built specifically for NDIS providers who are serious about running a tight ship.

Let's talk about money.

Specifically — why so many NDIS providers deliver great services and still struggle with cash flow. The NDIS billing system is unlike anything most business owners have dealt with before. It has its own rules, its own price limits, its own portal, and its own very specific way of doing things.

Get it right and you get paid reliably. Get it wrong and you're chasing payments, fixing errors, and potentially triggering a compliance review.

How NDIS funding works

Participants receive funding through one of three management types as covered in Chapter 1, agency-managed, plan-managed, or self-managed arrangements — and each one affects how you get paid

As a registered provider, you can work with all three. Know which type each participant is before you deliver your first session — it determines who you invoice and how.

The NDIS Support Catalogue and Price Guide

The NDIS sets maximum prices for most support categories. You cannot charge more than the published rate. Period.

Every support item has a specific line item code in the NDIS Support Catalogue. Your invoices must reference the correct code, at or below the maximum price, for the correct participant.

Sounds straightforward. In practice, new providers regularly make mistakes — wrong codes, wrong rates, wrong participant numbers. Each error delays payment. Repeated errors attract attention from the Commission.

Before you submit your first invoice, make sure you understand exactly which line items apply to the services you're delivering.

Claiming through PRODA

For agency-managed participants, claims are submitted through PRODA — the Provider Digital Access portal. You'll need to set up your PRODA account as part of getting your business operational post-registration.

Claims are generally processed within a few business days — but only if they're submitted correctly. Errors get rejected and you start again.

The cash flow reality

Here's the honest truth about NDIS cash flow: there will be gaps.

Between delivering a service, submitting a claim or invoice, and actually receiving the money — time passes. Plan managers have their own payment cycles. PRODA has processing times. And if you make a billing error, add more time.

Plan for this. Maintain a cash buffer. Don't assume the money will land the week you need it.

HPA Plus

HPA Plus includes invoicing tools built specifically for NDIS providers — with the correct support item structure, clean formatting, and simple workflows so you spend less time on billing and more time delivering support. Generate invoices in minutes, track what's been paid and what's outstanding, and keep your cash flow visible at all times.

You made it through registration. You've been delivering supports, building your team, staying compliant. And then one day — sooner than you expect — renewal is on the horizon. A lot of providers are caught off guard by this. Don't be.

When does your registration expire?

Registration periods vary depending on your registration type and when you first registered. The NDIS Commission will notify you when renewal is due — but don't wait for the letter. Know your expiry date and start preparing well in advance. Missing your renewal window doesn't just mean paperwork delays. It means you may not be able to legally deliver supports while your registration lapses. For a business that depends on NDIS participants, that's an existential problem.

The renewal audit

Just like your initial registration, renewal requires an audit. The same types apply — verification for lower-risk supports, certification for higher-risk.

The good news: if you've run a tight ship since you registered, renewal is significantly less stressful than the first time. You're not building from scratch — you're demonstrating that what you said you'd do, you actually did.

The bad news: if you've let things slip — outdated policies, incomplete training records, unresolved incidents — it will show. Auditors aren't just looking at your documentation on the day. They're looking at evidence of how you've been operating across your entire registration period.

What auditors look for at renewal

- Are your policies and procedures current and still compliant with the latest Practice Standards?
- Do you have evidence of ongoing staff training with completion records?
- Are your incident reports complete, timely, and properly managed?
- Have previous non-conformities from your last audit been addressed?
- Is your service delivery aligned with what you registered to deliver?

If the answer to any of these is "not really" — you need to fix that before your audit, not during it.

The biggest renewal mistakes

- Leaving it too late. Renewal audits take time to schedule and complete. Start the process at least 3–6 months before your expiry date.
- Assuming nothing has changed. The NDIS Practice Standards and legislative requirements have almost certainly been updated since you last registered. Your policies need to reflect the current version, not the one from when you first applied.
- Ignoring previous non-conformities. Auditors remember. Or more accurately — the evidence trail shows. Address every non-conformity from your last audit and document how you addressed it.



HPA tip

Renewal doesn't have to be stressful — if you've had the right support throughout your registration period. Health Provider Assist offers dedicated renewal assistance as a standalone service. And for providers on HPA's full registration packages, lifetime renewals are included. We handle the preparation, documentation review, and audit support so you can focus on running your business — not scrambling through paperwork.

That's Part Two done. You now know how to stay compliant, manage your team, deliver great services, get paid correctly, and navigate renewal with confidence.

In Part Three, we shift gears entirely — from surviving to thriving. It's time to talk about growth.

You're registered. You're compliant. You're ready to deliver.

Now comes the question every provider eventually asks out loud: "How do I actually find clients?"

It's the most common gap between getting registered and building a real business. And it's the one that catches the most providers off guard — because nobody teaches you this part.

The good news: there are channels that work. Reliably, repeatedly, and without a massive marketing budget.

Word of mouth — your most powerful tool

In the disability support community, reputation travels fast.

One participant who loves your service tells their Support Coordinator. That Support Coordinator refers three more participants. One of those participants' families tells someone in their network. Before long, your pipeline is full — not because of advertising, but because you delivered on your promises.

This is how most successful NDIS businesses actually grow. Not through ads. Through trust.

The implication: every single interaction with a participant or their family is a marketing moment. Show up on time. Communicate clearly. Be honest when things don't go perfectly. The providers who treat every participant like they're the only one are the ones who never struggle to find the next one.

Support Coordinators — build these relationships

If word of mouth is the engine, Support Coordinators are the fuel.

Support Coordinators help NDIS participants implement their plans and connect with providers. A single Support Coordinator might refer dozens of participants to providers they trust. Getting in front of them — and earning their confidence — is one of the highest-return activities you can invest time in.

How? Introduce yourself. Be easy to work with. Respond to enquiries quickly. Be honest about your capacity and capabilities. Don't overpromise. Support Coordinators have long memories — both for providers who deliver and providers who don't.

Online directories

In 2026, participants and their families search online. They Google the type of support they need, they check directories, they read reviews. If you're not visible online, you don't exist for a huge portion of your potential client base.

Getting listed on reputable NDIS provider directories puts you in front of people who are actively looking — not passively scrolling. These are high-intent searches. Someone who types "NDIS support worker Melbourne" into a search engine wants to find a provider right now.

Your Google presence

A professional website and a fully optimised Google Business Profile are non-negotiable in a competitive market. When someone searches for an NDIS provider in your area, you need to show up — and when they land on your listing or website, what they find needs to build trust immediately.

Reviews matter enormously here. A provider with 50 Google reviews at 4.9 stars will win the click over a provider with none, every single time. Start collecting reviews from happy participants and families from day one. Make it easy — send them a direct link.

Health Provider Finder

Health Provider Finder is a nationwide NDIS provider directory built specifically to connect verified providers with participants who are actively looking for support. List your business, showcase your services, and be found by participants searching in your area right now. You can also receive enquiries directly — participants post their care needs and providers respond. It's one of the most direct pipelines to new participants available to registered providers in Australia. Visit healthproviderfinder.com.au (<http://healthproviderfinder.com.au/>) to get listed.

Most NDIS providers underinvest in marketing.

Then they wonder why growth is slow, why they're constantly chasing new participants, and why some less experienced provider down the road seems to be busier than they are.

Here's the reality: delivering great care is not enough if nobody knows you exist. Marketing isn't optional — it's how you build a sustainable pipeline of participants so your business isn't one cancellation away from a cash flow crisis.

The good news: you don't need a big budget or a marketing degree. You need the fundamentals done well.

Your website — first impressions are everything

Your website is working for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week — or it isn't.

When a participant, their family, or a Support Coordinator lands on your site, they make a judgement call in seconds. Does this look professional? Do I trust these people with someone I love? Is it easy to find out what they do and how to contact them?

If your website is slow, hard to navigate, or looks like it was built in 2015 — they've already moved on.

At minimum your website needs to clearly communicate:

- Who you are and what you stand for
- Which supports you deliver and which areas you service
- Why you're the right choice (your experience, your values, your reviews)
- How to get in touch — phone number front and centre, not buried at the bottom

Google reviews — your silent sales team

There are 276,000+ active NDIS providers in Australia. Participants have options. Reviews are how they choose between them.

A provider with 50 five-star Google reviews and a 4.9 rating will outconvert a provider with zero reviews almost every time — even if the zero-review provider is objectively better. Perception is reality in a market where participants can't trial your service before committing.

Build a system for collecting reviews. After every positive interaction, ask. Send a direct link. Make it take 60 seconds. Do this consistently and your review count becomes a genuine competitive moat that takes competitors years to close.

Social media — consistency beats perfection

Facebook remains the dominant platform for reaching NDIS participants, their families, and Support Coordinators. Instagram has a growing presence. LinkedIn matters if you're targeting professional referrers.

You don't need to post every day. You need to post consistently — and post content that's actually useful or interesting to your audience. Tips for families navigating the NDIS. Staff introductions. Participant stories (with consent). Updates on your services.

The goal isn't viral reach. It's credibility. When a Support Coordinator checks your Facebook page before referring a participant to you, you want them to see an active, professional, community-focused business — not a page that hasn't been updated since 2023.

Your brand

In a crowded market, a professional brand signals that you're serious.

A polished logo, consistent colours, and professional materials — your website, your email signature, your staff uniforms, your business card — all of it contributes to how participants, families, and referrers perceive you. The providers who look the part attract more of the right clients, command more trust, and have an easier time growing.

HPA Business Package

If you want to launch — or relaunch — with a brand that means business, HPA's Business Package has you covered. Logo design, a custom 5-page website, 12 months of hosting, email hosting, digital business card, letterhead, flyer, workwear design, Facebook and Instagram page setup, and Google My Business setup. Everything you need to look professional from day one — included in HPA's full registration packages.

At some point, the question shifts.

It's no longer "how do I get my first participant?" It's "how do I handle the next 20 without everything falling apart?"

Scaling an NDIS business is exciting — and genuinely hard. The things that got you to this point won't necessarily get you to the next. The systems that worked for 5 participants break at 25. The management style that worked for 3 staff members doesn't work for 15.

The providers who scale successfully are the ones who build for where they're going — not just where they are.

Know when you're ready

Scaling too early is just as dangerous as scaling too late.

The right time to grow is when:

- Your current capacity is consistently full
- Your compliance systems are stable and not dependent on you personally
- Your billing and cash flow are predictable
- You have at least one person you trust to manage operations when you're not there

If any of those aren't true yet, fix them before you add more participants and more staff. Growth amplifies everything — including problems.

Systems before headcount

Every time you hire a new support worker, your administrative load grows. More screening checks to manage. More training to track. More schedules to coordinate. More progress notes to oversee. More invoices to generate.

Without systems, this administrative burden eventually overtakes your ability to actually run the business. You end up spending 60 hours a week managing admin instead of growing, and quality starts to slip.

The providers who scale smoothly are the ones who invested in the right operational tools early — before they desperately needed them. Practice management software, digital documentation, automated invoicing, staff training platforms — these aren't luxuries for big organisations. They're the infrastructure that makes growth possible.

Expanding your registration groups

As your business matures and your team's qualifications develop, you may be eligible to expand into new registration groups — opening access to a broader range of participants and higher-value support categories.



This isn't something to rush. But it's worth planning for. Some registration groups — specialist behaviour support, SIL, early childhood — require specific qualifications and carry higher compliance obligations. Build toward them deliberately, not reactively.

Building a management layer

The hardest mindset shift for a growing NDIS provider is moving from operator to leader.

When it's just you, you know everything. You do everything. You are the quality control. But as your team grows, that model doesn't scale. At some point you need to trust other people to represent your business — and to do that, you need documented processes, clear expectations, and the right people in the right roles.

Start building that layer before you need it. Identify who on your team could step into a team leader role. Document your processes so others can follow them. Create a culture where quality is everyone's responsibility — not just yours.

The full HPA ecosystem — built for scale

As your business grows, the complexity grows with it. More participants means more compliance obligations. More staff means more training to manage. More services means more invoicing complexity. More growth means needing to be found by more participants.

The HPA ecosystem is designed to scale with you at every stage. HPA Portal keeps compliance and training on track as your team expands. HPA Plus manages your growing client, scheduling and invoicing load. Health Provider Finder keeps new participants finding you as your capacity grows. And whenever you need to expand or renew your registration, Health Provider Assist is right there.

One ecosystem. Every stage. No gaps.

Anyone can start an NDIS business.

Not everyone builds one that lasts.

The disability support sector has seen thousands of providers come and go since the NDIS launched. Some failed because they got the compliance wrong. Some because they couldn't find enough participants. Some because they grew too fast without the systems to support it. And some because they simply burned out trying to do everything themselves.

The providers still standing — and thriving — a decade into this sector share some common traits. Not luck. Not connections. Deliberate choices made consistently over time.

Stay ahead of the changes

The NDIS will keep evolving. It always has.

In the next 12–24 months alone: new planning frameworks roll out, mandatory registration expands, foundational supports begin diverting some children into state-run services, and the fraud crackdown continues to intensify. The providers who thrive through all of this are the ones who stay informed — not reactive.

Subscribe to NDIS Commission updates. Read the quarterly reports. Understand what's changing and what it means for your business before it affects you. Being 6 months ahead of a compliance change is an advantage. Being 6 months behind is a crisis.

Build a culture of quality

Your reputation in the disability community is everything — and it's surprisingly fragile.

It takes years to build and months to destroy. One serious incident handled badly. A pattern of late shows and poor communication. A staff member who doesn't reflect your values. Any of these can undo the trust you've worked hard to build.

The providers who sustain long-term success are the ones who make quality non-negotiable at every level of the organisation. Not just in the board-level policies — but in every support session, every phone call, every interaction between a staff member and a participant.

That kind of culture doesn't happen by accident. It's built through hiring carefully, training thoroughly, and holding everyone — including yourself — to a consistent standard.

Think like a business owner, not a support worker

This is the mindset shift that separates providers who plateau from providers who grow.

Support workers focus on the person in front of them. Business owners do that — and they also think about systems, revenue, staff development, market positioning, and long-term sustainability.



You can absolutely be both. The best NDIS business owners are both. But if you never make the mental shift from "I deliver care" to "I lead an organisation that delivers care", your growth will have a ceiling.

The opportunity is still enormous

Here's where we land.

Nearly 771,000 Australians are on the NDIS right now. Tens of thousands more enter the Scheme every quarter. The annual spend is approaching \$50 billion — and it's projected to keep growing for years to come. The demand for quality, reliable, registered providers has never been higher.

Yes, the rules are tighter. Yes, the compliance bar has been raised. Yes, the environment is more scrutinised than it's ever been.

But that's not bad news for providers who do this properly. It's a filter. The providers who register correctly, operate compliantly, and build genuine businesses will inherit a market that's increasingly clearing itself of the ones who don't.

You have everything it takes to be one of them.

Go build something great.

Your Next Step Starts Here



You've got the blueprint.

Fourteen chapters covering everything from understanding the NDIS landscape to building a business that lasts. The registration process, the compliance obligations, the team management, the billing, the marketing, the growth — all of it, laid out honestly and practically.

Now it comes down to one question: what are you going to do with it?

The NDIS doesn't reward people who wait. It rewards people who act — who register properly, build solid foundations, and show up consistently for the participants who need them.

Wherever you are right now, HPA has built something specifically for you.

Continue on to the next page to learn more.

Not yet registered as an NDIS or Aged Care provider?

Health Provider Assist will manage your entire registration — from documentation and policies through to audit preparation and approval. You get a dedicated client manager, compliant documentation for up to 36 service categories, and a 100% money-back guarantee if your application isn't approved.

Thousands of providers have trusted us with this step. We've never let them down.

Book your free consultation at healthproviderassist.com.au

Registered but struggling with compliance, staff training, or staying audit-ready?

The HPA Portal gives you real-time compliance tracking, preloaded staff training modules with certificates, document management, and NADO — your 24/7 AI compliance assistant. Everything you need to run a tight, compliant operation without it consuming your life.

From \$99/month. Try it free for 7 days — no lock-in.

Start your free trial at portal.healthproviderassist.com.au

Drowning in admin — clients, invoices, schedules, progress notes?

HPA Plus is purpose-built practice management software for NDIS and Aged Care providers. Client management, staff scheduling, invoicing, and progress notes — all in one place, on any device, at a price that makes sense for your business.

Try HPA Plus at hpaplus.com.au

Ready to grow your participant base?

Get your business listed on Health Provider Finder — Australia's nationwide NDIS provider directory. Be found by participants who are actively searching for quality providers in your area right now.

List your business at healthproviderfinder.com.au



The NDIS needs more quality providers.

Not providers who cut corners. Not providers who get registered and then wing it. Providers who take this seriously — who invest in the right foundations, build with integrity, and genuinely show up for the people in their care.

That's who this guide was written for.

That's who HPA was built to support.

Welcome to the journey. We're with you every step of the way.



Set up your NDIS business the right way

SCAN FOR MORE INFO



HPA



HPA portal



HPA Plus



Health Provider
Finder



Health Provider Assist