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May Updates



As Autumn settles into its steady, self-found rhythm, GRANN has been doing much the same. This season has brought quieter growth, new ideas taking shape behind the scenes, and the beginning of projects we're excited to share more about as we prepare for Winter and everything it may bring with it.

Over the coming months, we will be launching new *'This Is Me: NeuroKind Circles'* – *Neurodivergent-Led & Supported Sessions*, a series of gentle online creative and interest-led spaces designed around autonomy, sensory consideration, low-pressure participation, and community without obligation.

From visual collage circles and image-based creative sessions, to shadow play, puppetry, these circles are being built to honour different ways of thinking, communicating, creating, and simply being.

We are also beginning to share early information about *NeuroPathways: WorkLab to Employment*, a new neuro-affirming work and enterprise initiative currently being

developed in partnership with GRANN. This project explores more sustainable and ethical pathways into work, self-employment, job crafting, and meaningful workplace participation for Autistic and otherwise Neurodivergent people, recognising that many traditional employment systems were never designed with our nervous systems in mind.

Alongside these projects, this month's newsletter also includes important updates and reflections relating to the NDIS, community access, and the ongoing changes many people are currently navigating across disability and support systems.

As always, thank you for continuing to grow alongside us. Whether you've attended a session, shared an idea, quietly followed along, or simply found comfort in knowing these spaces exist, we're glad you're here.

Keep an eye out on the GRANN website and Facebook page as more information, dates, and registrations for upcoming sessions is released over the coming weeks.



What Is Changing With the NDIS?

A Neurodivergent Community Guide to the "Securing the NDIS for Future Generations" Changes

The National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2026 was introduced to Parliament on 14 May 2026 by the current Australian Government. On the same day, the Senate referred it to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee, with submissions due 29 May 2026 and a report due 16 June 2026.

The bill is the next major legislative step after the 2024 "Getting the NDIS Back on Track" reforms and the 2025–26 Integrity and Safeguarding reforms.

Below are the major changes to the National Disability Insurance Agency and the NDIS (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2024, as we have interpreted.

The Government says the changes are about:

- making the NDIS sustainable
- reducing fraud and overspending
- making rules clearer
- helping the NDIS "return to its original intent"

Many disabled people, Autistic people, families, advocates, and community organisations are worried about what these changes could mean in real life. This guide explains the changes in plain language, while still keeping the important detail and context.

Why Was the Bill Introduced?

The Government argued that the NDIS was growing too quickly and costing more money each year. Politicians and media often described the scheme as “unsustainable.”

At the same time:

- many disabled people were already struggling to access support
- waitlists were growing
- people were fighting for basic needs through reviews and appeals
- regional and rural communities were already under-serviced
- psychosocial disability supports were inconsistent
- Autistic and Neurodivergent people were increasingly under scrutiny

The Government said reform was needed to protect the NDIS “for future generations.” Many disability advocates argued the conversation became heavily focused on cost instead of rights, inclusion, and quality of life.

What Changed?

The reforms change how the NDIS works in several major ways.

1. New Definition of What Can Be Funded

The Government created a stricter definition of what counts as an NDIS support. This means supports must now fit specific legal criteria before they can be funded.

The new rules focus on whether supports are:

- directly related to disability
- effective and "evidence-based"
- value for money
- not the responsibility of another system

This sounds simple, but many supports used by disabled people exist in “grey areas.”

For example:

- sensory supports
- emotional regulation supports
- social connection supports
- support coordination-style activities
- capacity building
- peer-led programs
- neuro-affirming supports
- everyday regulation supports

Many people worry these may become harder to justify.

2. Lists of Supports

The reforms allow governments to create lists of:

Supports that CAN be funded

and

Supports that CANNOT be funded

This is one of the biggest changes.

Previously, many decisions were made more individually.

Now governments can effectively “pre-decide” categories of support.

This creates concern because governments can later change lists without rewriting the whole Act.

Many advocates worry this gives future governments more power to narrow supports over time.

3. Foundational Supports

The Government says some people will receive “foundational supports” outside the NDIS instead.

These are meant to support people who:

- do not meet NDIS access
- lose access
- need lower levels of support
- need early intervention or community supports

The problem is:

many foundational supports do not fully exist yet.

This creates fear that people may lose NDIS access before replacement systems are properly built.

There are also concerns about:

- postcode differences
- inconsistent state funding
- long waitlists
- service gaps
- fewer protections and review rights

Many community organisations fear this could recreate the old “service lottery” that existed before the NDIS.

4. Shorter Plans and Tighter Budgets

The reforms allow more detailed budget controls.

This includes:

- funding tied to categories
- limits on how funding is spent
- tighter monitoring

- less flexibility

Many disabled, Autistic, and otherwise Neurodivergent people use flexibility to adapt to fluctuating needs, burnout, mental health changes, sensory capacity, executive functioning, or crisis periods.

More rigid budgets may create problems for people whose support needs are dynamic and unpredictable.

5. Increased Power of Rules and Delegated Legislation

A major concern from legal experts and advocates is that many important decisions are no longer fully written into the Act itself.

Instead, they may be decided later through:

- rules
- ministerial decisions
- operational guidelines

This is important to note because rules can often be changed more easily than legislation.

Some advocates describe this as a shift away from rights-based certainty toward administrative control.

6. Changes to Access and Reassessments

The reforms increase the focus on reassessments and evidence.

Many people fear this will increase:

- paperwork
- surveillance
- proving disability repeatedly
- functional testing
- administrative burden
- stress and burnout

This is especially concerning for:

- Autistic people
- people with psychosocial disability
- people with fluctuating disability
- intellectually disabled people
- people with trauma histories
- people with limited literacy or advocacy access

Many people already describe the NDIS as exhausting, adversarial, and retraumatizing.

**Why Are People Concerned?
The Language of “Sustainability”**

Many disabled people feel the public conversation focused heavily on disabled people as a “cost problem.”

Media coverage often highlighted:

- fraud
- overspending
- “blowouts”
- rising participant numbers

Autistic participants were frequently singled out in public debate.
This created fear and stigma in many communities.

Advocates argue that:

- disability support is not waste
- inclusion costs money
- prevention costs less than crisis
- support improves long-term participation and wellbeing

Many people worry Australia is reframing disability rights as a budget issue rather than a human rights issue.

Concerns for Autistic and otherwise Neurodivergent Communities

Many Autistic and Neurodivergent people are especially worried because:

Neurodivergent support needs are often misunderstood

Supports may not look “medical enough” to systems.

Needs like:

- sensory regulation
- burnout prevention
- executive functioning support
- social recovery
- co-regulation
- communication support
- flexible participation
- identity-affirming support

are often incorrectly viewed as optional.

Peer-led and Neuro-affirming Supports May Be At Risk

Many community-led supports do not fit traditional medical models.

Yet these supports are often the most accessible, culturally safe, and effective.

Smaller organisations fear they may struggle under stricter funding systems and compliance structures.

This may especially affect:

- regional organisations
- grassroots groups

- peer-led programs
- informal support spaces
- innovative models

Regional Communities May Be Hit Harder

Regional and rural communities already face:

- workforce shortages
- long travel times
- fewer providers
- limited specialist access
- reduced choice and control

If supports become more restricted, regional participants may have even fewer options.

Some fear “choice and control” may become theoretical rather than real.

What Could Happen in the Future?

The long-term effects will depend on:

- future rules
- future governments
- NDIA interpretation
- Tribunal decisions
- funding priorities
- state government cooperation
- advocacy pressure

Possible future outcomes include:

Potential Positive Outcomes

- clearer rules
- less exploitation and fraud
- more consistency
- stronger early supports if properly funded
- improved navigation pathways

Potential Negative Outcomes

- more people excluded
- reduced flexibility
- increased gatekeeping
- more appeals and reviews
- loss of preventative supports
- burnout and crisis escalation
- greater inequality between regions
- increased institutionalisation or homelessness risk for some people

- collapse of smaller community organisations
- narrowing of what disability support is allowed to look like

The Bigger Question

The reforms raise a deeper question:

What is the NDIS actually for?

Is it:

- a tightly controlled medical support scheme?
or
- a human rights and participation framework?

Those two visions can lead to very different systems.

Many disabled people argue that support should not only exist to keep people alive or employed.

Support also matters for:

- dignity
- belonging
- autonomy
- culture
- communication
- identity
- creativity
- rest
- relationships
- meaningful community participation
- quality of life

What Happens Next?

The reforms are already changing how the NDIS operates, but many details are still evolving.

A lot will depend on:

- future rules and operational guidelines
- advocacy from disabled communities
- legal challenges and reviews
- how governments design foundational supports
- whether community voices are genuinely included

Many disabled people, families, and organisations are now watching closely to see whether these reforms strengthen support systems... or slowly narrow them.

Further Reading

Official Government Sources

- [NDIS Amendment \(Securing the NDIS for Future Generations\) Bill 2026](#)



Something New GRANN Is Working On...

GRANN is currently developing **NeuroPathways: WorkLab to Employment** -

a neuro-affirming, strengths-based program exploring work, job crafting, self-employment, workplace navigation, and sustainable pathways for Autistic and otherwise Neurodivergent people.

This project is a passion project of GRANN CEO bee austin, a psychosocial recovery coach and soon-to-be rehabilitation counsellor, developed from both lived and professional experience navigating the gaps many Autistic and otherwise Neurodivergent people face in traditional employment systems.

The program is being built around a simple but important idea:

We do not “fix” people to fit jobs. We shape work to fit people.

NeuroPathways aims to explore more sustainable, ethical, culturally safe, and neuro-affirming employment pathways, including:

- Job crafting
- Self-employment and micro-enterprise
- Energy-aligned work
- Workplace navigation and advocacy
- Strengths-based approaches to work identity and participation

We are still refining the program and would love to gauge interest from the community. We would especially love to hear from:

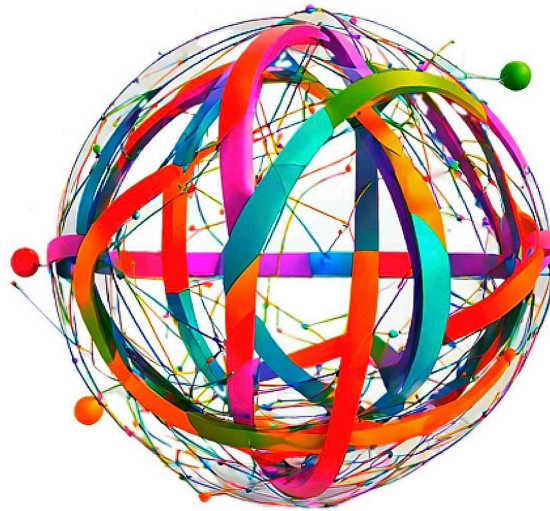
- Community members who may be interested in participating
- Practitioners, peer workers, educators, or employers interested in contributing ideas and knowledge

- People interested in helping co-design or deliver parts of the program
- Organisations or businesses able to offer in-kind support, materials, spaces, mentoring, or collaboration

If this sounds like something you'd like to be involved in, we'd love to hear from you.

Email GRANN to get in touch and register your interest.

This Is Me: NeuroKind Circles ***Neurodivergent-Led & Supported Sessions***



Coming Soon:

GRANN is excited to be launching a variety of new '**This Is Me: NeuroKind Circles**' – **Neurodivergent-Led & Supported Sessions** from June.

These gentle, low-pressure online creative and interest-based sessions are designed for Autistic and Neurodivergent people, with a focus on connection, autonomy, sensory consideration, and community without obligation.

Upcoming circles will include:
Shadow Play & Puppets – *Light & Shape*
Vision Board Pin-Ups – *Pieces That Pull (more info to come)*
Parallel Play – *Air-Dry Clay Edition*
Online Community Connection Sessions
...and more.

No experience is needed, and many sessions are designed with flexible participation and low-demand engagement in mind.

Dates, session details, and registration information will be released over the coming weeks via:

[GRANN Website](#)
[GRANN Facebook page](#)
[Humanitix](#)

We're looking forward to sharing these spaces with community soon.

Online Community Connection Sessions

Gently held online spaces.

Our blend of Body Doubling, Parallel Play, & Special Interests.

Community-led, low-demand, and entirely flexible.

You can join with your camera off, bring a task (or not), sit in silence, stim, share, or just exist alongside others who get it.

 Come as you are. Stay as you need.

Individual sessions

&

Groups sessions

Available

Cost: \$10

Or

Pay What You Can in Solidarity

Bookings open in June via grann.com.au

**Online event will held via Jitsi. Access link will be delivered via email before the event.*

Online Community Connection Sessions

These sessions are community-led, flexible, and low-demand.
Come as you are.
Engage however you feel comfortable.



Email ✉ info@grann.com.au
Visit 🌐 <http://www.grann.com.au>

New!

Parallel Play – Air-Dry Clay Edition

Join us online for a relaxed, low-demand creative session where you can simply *be* - no pressure to talk, share, or perform.

These circles are grounded in:

- 🧠 **Autonomy** – participate your way
- 🌿 **Low demand** – no expectations
- 🎨 **Curiosity** – create without judgement
- 🤝 **Community** – connection that feels safe

Session details:

📍 Online

🕒 60 minutes

🌟 Free

📅 **17** Dates: Starting June

Dated and event info will be release on Humanitix in the upcoming weeks.

**Online event will held via Jitsi.*

Access link will be delivered via email before the event.

Bring some air-dry clay (or play-dough, slime, or anything tactile) and let your hands wander. You might sculpt, fidget, or just observe — all forms of participation are welcome.

This is **parallel play**: being alongside others without social pressure.
Camera on or off, talking optional - your presence is enough.

Sometimes connection looks like conversation.

Sometimes it looks like a quiet piece of clay taking shape in your hands.

Facilitated by GRANN

COMING SOON

CLAY

This Is Me: NeuroKind Circles
The Squish & Sculpt Clayground
Parallel Play - (Air-Dry) Clay Edition

WELCOME TO NEUROKIND CIRCLES, A SPACE WHERE AUTISTIC AND NEURODIVERGENT PEOPLE CAN SPEND TIME TOGETHER ONLINE WITHOUT THE PRESSURE TO PERFORM SOCIALLY.

SOMETIMES CONNECTION LOOKS LIKE CONVERSATION.
SOMETIMES IT LOOKS LIKE A QUIET LITTLE LUMP OF CLAY SLOWLY BECOMING SOMETHING UNDER YOUR HANDS.

FOR THIS SESSION, WE'RE GATHERING ONLINE WITH AIR-DRY CLAY AND LETTING OUR HANDS DO THE WANDERING.

NO ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE REQUIRED.
NO EXPECTATIONS.
NO "SHOW AND TELL" UNLESS YOU FEEL LIKE IT.
JUST PEOPLE, CLAY, AND A BIT OF SHARED CREATIVITY.

THESE CIRCLES ARE BUILT AROUND A FEW AFFIRMING IDEAS:

- AUTONOMY - YOU CHOOSE HOW YOU PARTICIPATE
- LOW DEMAND - NO PRESSURE TO TALK OR SHARE
- CURIOSITY - CREATIVITY WITHOUT JUDGEMENT
- COMMUNITY - CREATING WAYS OF BEING TOGETHER THAT FEEL SAFE

SESSION DETAILS:

- ONLINE. BOOK VIA HUMANITIX (ZOOM LINK PROVIDED AFTER REGISTRATION)
- TIMES AND DATES LISTED @ HUMANITIX
- COST: FREE
- DURATION: APPROXIMATELY 60 MINS

60 mins

FACILITATED BY GRANN

Parallel play, but online
This means we're doing something side-by-side without social pressure.
Your camera can be:

- on or off
- pointed at your clay, pointed at the ceiling, or nowhere at all.

Talking is optional. Listening is optional.
Being present in your own way is enough.
Some people like chatting while they create. Some prefer silence.
Both are completely welcome.

If you'd like to sculpt along, you might bring:

- air-dry clay
- a small cup of water
- simple tools (toothpicks, forks, butter knife, pencil)
- a cloth or tray to work on

But you can also join with:

- play-dough
- blu-tack
- slime
- kinetic sand
- or nothing at all.

Watching counts too.

Free

The Wonky Clay Jam Club

60 mins

You might:

- roll it
- flatten it
- make tiny creatures
- make abstract shapes
- fidget with it
- sculpt something meaningful
- or simply enjoy the texture

There's no right way to clay.

Sensory notes:
Air-dry clay can feel:

- cool
- slightly gritty
- soft when kneaded
- firm and hard as it dries

If clay textures aren't your thing, feel free to stim, draw, knit, doodle, or simply hang out.

By the end of the session you might have:

- a tiny sculpture
- a strange creature
- a wonky bowl
- a pocket stone
- or just a pleasantly squished piece of clay.

All outcomes are excellent outcomes.

FACILITATED BY The Gladstone Region Autistic & Neurodivergent Network Inc. - GRANN

Contact GRANN via email to register your interest: info@grann.com.au

Tiny Creatures & Other Questionable Sculptures

Light & Shape: Shadow Play and Puppets

A gentle, image-led creative session

An online, ND-led supported session exploring shadow play, puppetry, and storytelling through light, movement, and form.

This is not a performance or acting workshop.
There is no expectation to speak, perform, or tell a story.

The facilitator will demonstrate shadow play and puppet-making live, guided by participant input, shared themes, and quiet observation.
You can participate by watching, experimenting, responding in chat, or simply being present.

Who This Session Is For:

Autistic and Neurodivergent people

Visual and sensory thinkers

People who enjoy movement, light, or tactile materials

Those who prefer minimal speaking or structured interaction

No experience needed.

Instead, this session invites participants to explore:

Shadows

Silhouettes

Movement

Shape and form

Simple puppets (felt, paper, or found objects)

What You'll Ne

If you'd like to experiment alongside the session, you might use:

A light source (lamp, torch, phone light)

Paper, cardboard, or your hands

Simple shapes or cut-outs

Felt or soft materials (optional)

Household objects to create shadows

You do not need any materials to attend.

You can also participate by watching only.

Cost: Free

Format: Online

Dates: Starting June

All dates and event info will be released via Humanitix in the coming weeks

**Online event will held via Jitsi.*

Access link will be delivered via email before the event.

You're welcome to attend once, occasionally, or regularly.

Predictability is the container. Content is the variable.

Facilitated by GRANN

Belonging without pressure.



Expression of Interest

Hot Wheels Interest Group

GRANN is exploring the creation of a **Hot Wheels Interest Group** for Autistic and Neurodivergent people.

This group would be a relaxed, interest-led space for people who enjoy:

Hot Wheels cars

Collecting

Tracks and layouts

Design, sorting, or organising

Talking about favourite cars or themes

Or simply being around others who share the interest

No expertise is required.

You don't need to talk or participate in any specific way, or at all.

This Expression of Interest helps us understand:

Who might like to attend

Preferred days/times

Whether people are interested online, in-person, or both

There is **no commitment** by submitting an EOI.

Who is this for?
Autistic and Neurodivergent individuals
Support people are welcome
All ages welcome

If you have access needs or preferences, please share them if you feel comfortable to do so.

Register your interest or email GRANN at: info@grann.com.au



Thank you to those who have registered interest in the Hot Wheels Interest Group. We really appreciate you taking the time to let us know your interests.

We are again seeking Expressions of Interest in our Hot Wheels Interest Group in the hopes that we have an increase interest for children and young people under 14 years of age.

*Thank you for your patience and understanding.
We'll be in touch if and when the group is able to move forward.*

***Autistic & Neurodivergent-led
Organisations, Supports, & Resources***



**Supports
Signpost**

**GRANN
Resources**



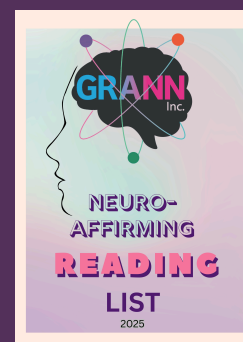
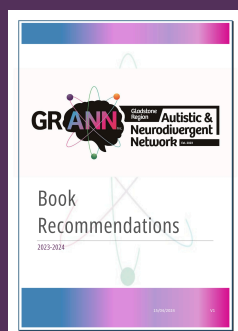
Autistic & Neurodivergent Books and Authors

Looking for stories that reflect *you* or someone you love?
GRANN's carefully curated 2024 & 2025 Booklists includes powerful titles by
and for Autistic and Neurodivergent people - spanning identity, advocacy,
creativity, lived experience, children's stories, YA fiction, and more.

Whether you're seeking representation, learning, or just a good read that doesn't
pathologise your existence, there's something here for you.

*We are currently building our 2026 version to support the latest
information, resources, and good reads out there for our
communities.*

*If you have a good read to add to the list, please get in touch with
us.*



Want to Get Involved? Volunteer with GRANN

GRANN is powered by community - and we're always grateful for kind, creative, Neurodivergent-led hands to help shape what we do. Whether you're looking to contribute your time, skills, ideas, or presence, we'd love to hear from you.

Volunteering with GRANN can look like:

- 🖥️ Helping behind the scenes with admin or website content
- 🎨 Co-creating accessible resources or artwork
- 📣 Supporting events, workshops, or advocacy campaigns
- 🧸 Offering lived experience wisdom or gentle peer support

Lived experience needed and a willingness to show up in your own way.

Flexible, affirming, and low-demand roles available.
We'll always work with your access needs and capacity.

Register below or visit our website www.grann.com.au
and click "Volunteer" in the menu

You can also ✉️ Email us at: info@grann.com.au

🌈 Thank you for helping us build something meaningful and proudly Neurodivergent led.

📄 Register your interest to volunteer here:

**Volunteer
EOI Form**

Your Views Matters

We'd Love Your Feedback

✨ **Share what's working. Tell us what's not. Suggest something new.**

At GRANN, everything we do is shaped by *you*, our community. Your experiences, insights, and ideas help us create spaces that feel safer, more supportive, and more *you-shaped*.

Whether you've joined one of our sessions, explored our website, or just want to share a thought, book idea, resource, or suggestion - we'd love to hear from you.

Your feedback doesn't have to be formal or polished. Honest, imperfect, and heartfelt is welcome.

Access the Feedback Form below
or visit us at www.grann.com.au
and click "Contact" in the menu.

Prefer to send a message directly or use voice, pictures, or dot points instead of a form?

That's okay too. Let us know how we can walk beside you.

✉ Email us at: info@grann.com.au

🧠 Your views helps us build a place to belong, together.
Thank you for being part of it.

📝 **Access our feedback form here:**

[Feedback Form](#)



Gladstone Region Autistic & Neurodivergent Network Inc.

You've received this email because you've subscribed to our newsletter.





GRANN acknowledges the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng and Taribelang Bunda people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we reside and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

**Always Was. Always Will Be.
Sovereignty Was Never Ceded.**