

What the NDIS actually funds for technology, and what it does not

Who this is for: NDIS participants, families, self-managers, and support coordinators

Reading time: about 6 minutes

In one line: the NDIS funds more technology support than most people realise, but not the way most people assume.

Technology and the NDIS is an area full of half-truths. Some participants believe the scheme will buy them whatever device they ask for. Others believe it funds nothing tech-related at all. Both are wrong, and the truth sits in a more useful middle: the NDIS is often reluctant to buy mainstream devices, but it is frequently willing to fund the support, setup, and training that make technology actually work for you.

That distinction matters, because for most people the device was never the hard part.

The funding buckets that matter

Plans differ, and this is general information rather than advice about your plan. But broadly, three areas are relevant.

Core Supports, Assistance with Daily Life. This is the flexible part of most plans. Where technology support helps you with daily living tasks, support delivered through this budget can include hands-on help with the technology you rely on day to day.

Capacity Building, Improved Daily Living. This is where training lives. Learning to use your devices, building digital skills, becoming more independent with technology. Capacity building is exactly what it sounds like: funding to build your capability so you need less support over time. Technology training fits this purpose naturally, provided it links to your plan goals.

Assistive Technology. This is the bucket people usually think of first, and it is the most misunderstood. AT funding is for products and equipment related to your disability, with rules that scale with cost and risk. A communication device or a vision aid can clearly qualify. A standard iPad usually does not, because the NDIS generally does not fund items an ordinary person would buy anyway. There are exceptions where a mainstream device is the disability support, but do not build your plan around that assumption.

What this means in practice

Usually fundable, when linked to plan goals:

- Training to use your phone, tablet, or computer more independently
- Setup and configuration of accessibility features
- Help establishing safe, reliable routines around technology, such as video calling, reminders, or smart home basics
- Training for your family or carers so they can support you consistently
- Support to use technology for communication, community access, or daily structure, where those are plan goals

Usually not fundable:

- The mainstream devices themselves, in most circumstances
- Your internet bill, phone plan, or streaming subscriptions
- Repairs to everyday consumer electronics
- Anything that cannot be connected to a goal in your plan

The thread running through all of it is the connection to your goals. The NDIS does not fund technology because technology is nice. It funds supports that help you pursue the goals written in your plan. Which brings us to the most useful section of this guide.

How to frame technology goals at a plan review

If technology matters to your independence, the time to say so is at your planning meeting, and the way you say it matters. Goals framed around outcomes work better than goals framed around gadgets.

Compare these:

- "I want an iPad" is a request for a product.
- "I want to stay connected with my family and manage my own appointments independently" is a goal, and technology support is an obvious way to pursue it.

Some examples of goal language that creates room for technology support:

- "Build my skills and confidence to use everyday technology independently"
- "Use technology to stay safe at home and reduce my reliance on others for daily tasks"
- "Communicate with family and my support network regularly without assistance"

You do not need to mention brands, devices, or providers in your goals. Outcome-focused goals create the flexibility; the specifics come later.

A note on who can provide the support

Providers come in two flavours: registered and unregistered. If you are self-managed, you can use either. If you are plan-managed, you can also use either, and your plan manager handles the invoices. If you are agency-managed (NDIA-managed), you can only use registered providers.

Unregistered does not mean unprofessional. It means the provider has not gone through NDIS registration, which is common for small and specialised providers. What you should still expect from any provider, registered or not: a clear service agreement, compliant invoices that link services to your plan goals, and written records of what was done.

Questions worth asking any technology support provider

- Do you sell products or earn commissions? (If yes, understand the incentive you are dealing with.)
- Will you link each service to my plan goals in writing?
- Do you leave written notes after visits?
- What happens when something stops working after you leave?

The short version

The NDIS will rarely buy you a device, but it will often fund the thing that actually determines success: patient, goal-linked setup and training, for you and for the people around you. Frame your goals around outcomes, check how your plan is managed, and choose providers who document their work properly.

Gray Matter Solutions provides in-home technology support and training for plan-managed and self-managed participants across Sydney's Northern Beaches, North Shore, and Inner West. We are vendor-neutral, we sell nothing, and every invoice links to your plan goals.

Not sure where you fit? That is what the free call is for. Email phil@graymatter.team or visit graymatter.team.

This guide is general information, not advice about your individual plan. Always check with your plan manager, support coordinator, or the NDIA about your own circumstances. Gray Matter Solutions Pty Ltd, ABN 24 678 904 231.

Want a hand with this? Gray Matter Solutions provides patient, in-home technology support across the Northern Beaches, North Shore, and Inner West of Sydney, funded through NDIS, Support at Home, or privately. Start with a free 15-minute call: (02) 5761 0386, or phil@graymatter.team. More free guides at graymatter.team/insights/.