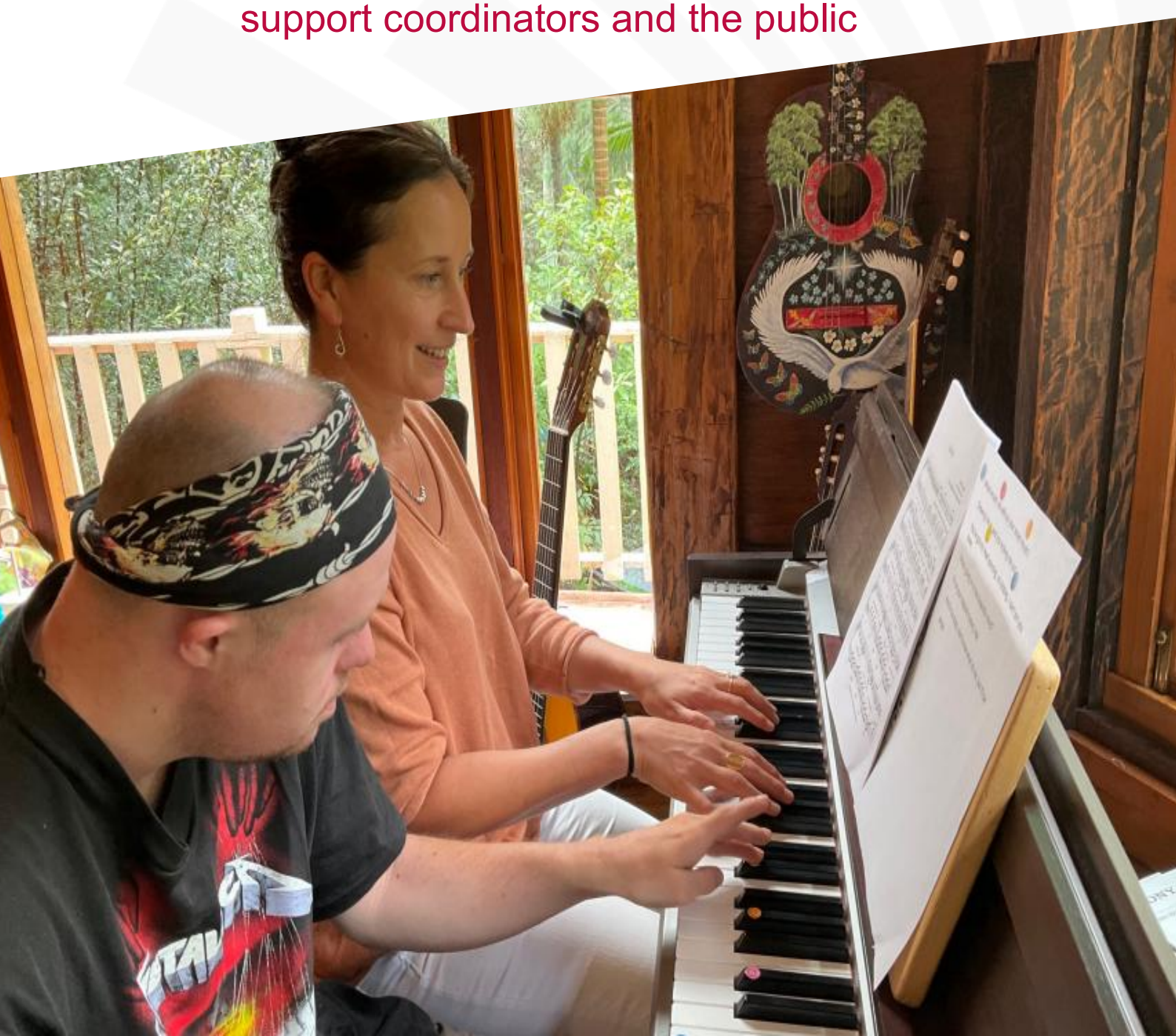
AUSTRALIAN music therapy ASSOCIATION

Music therapy and NDIS

Fact sheet for NDIS participants and their carers, plan managers, support coordinators and the public



Fact sheet for NDIS participants and their carers, plan managers, support coordinators and the public

The **Australian Music Therapy Association (AMTA)** has prepared this fact sheet to clarify the rules for accessing music therapy under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

We want to guide NDIS participants and carers through recent changes to the way music therapy is funded.

Music therapy is still an approved therapeutic support under the NDIS.

Music therapy remains a funded therapy support under Capacity Building:

- 15_615_0118_1_3 Early Childhood Intervention Professional – Music Therapist
- 15_615_0128_1_3 Assessment Recommendation Therapy or Training - Music Therapist.

The Independent Review of Art and Music Therapies led by leading health economist Dr Stephen Duckett AM confirmed that music therapy would continue to be available to people with disability under the NDIS where there is evidence it will provide beneficial outcomes. However, the hourly rate for music therapy funded by NDIS dropped to $156.16.

For more information, please view the updates from the NDIS website.

How can NDIS participants use funding for music therapy?

To use your NDIS funds for music therapy:

- It must be deemed reasonable and necessary (just the same as other therapy supports).
- There must be funds in your budget under therapy supports (Capacity Building: Improved Daily Living).

It must be provided by a registered music therapist with AMTA.

Just like other therapy supports:

- The reason for music therapy must relate directly to your NDIS goals.
- The service must not be duplicated by another service.
- Music therapy must address your 'functional impairment', as noted by the NDIS.

Good to know
Music therapy does not have to be explicitly named in a plan (that is, it doesn't have to be a 'stated support'). Just make sure your plan wording allows you to choose among therapy supports. If your plan does state a specific therapy type, you must follow that.

Stated support rules
If your plan includes funding under 'therapy supports', you may choose to use that funding for music therapy, provided it is deemed 'reasonable and necessary'. If your plan includes 'stated supports', you must spend your funding in the way that is stated.

For more information on stated supports, please visit NDIS Operational Guidelines for Therapy Supports.

Requesting music therapy in your plan
Currently, all requests for music therapy funding are being reviewed by the Technical Advice and Practice Improvement Branch (TAPIB) of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to make sure requests for music therapy meet the NDIS reasonable and necessary criteria.

If you are requesting a new plan or plan review, ensure your planner or local area coordinator (LAC) refers the request for music therapy directly to the TAPIB. Requests for music therapy are reviewed quickly and will not delay the rest of your plan in the meantime.

Music therapy is a standalone therapy; it doesn't need to be referred by another therapist or used in conjunction with other therapies. However, to support your request for music therapy, it is helpful to provide the TAPIB with evidence of how music therapy can support you to achieve your goals, and to ensure that your therapy supports are not duplicated across different therapies. You can do this by:

- providing a report from your registered music therapist
- providing an assessment from a registered music therapist (if you are seeking to have music therapy funded for the first time)
- ensuring any therapists you're working with can communicate with each other to ensure you're not duplicating supports
- requesting all your therapists to consult with each other and provide consistent recommendations in their reports.

What to do if your music therapy request is declined

If a request for music therapy is not approved under your plan, you can:

- Ask your registered music therapist to reach out to the AMTA's Disability Advisor, **Dr Zara Thompson RMT**, via disability@austmta.org.au
- Request a review - especially if you believe your support needs match the 'reasonable and necessary' criteria.

Recent changes to the rules

A recent independent review looked at the evidence, registration requirements and pricing of music therapy under the NDIS. As a result:

Music therapy remains a funded therapeutic support.

The national price cap for music therapy sessions funded by NDIS is now $156.16 an hour (GST inclusive).

The NDIA is now assessing all requests for music therapy against its 'reasonable and necessary' criteria.

But what about... ? FAQs

Is music therapy still funded under the NDIS?

Yes. After a government announcement, speculation in news reports and an independent review, music therapy remains an NDIS-funded support. The NDIA's rules around music therapy changed, but music therapy never lost its status as a therapy support funded under the NDIS. The NDIA has a helpful summary of the recommendations and its responses.

Does music therapy need to be referred by another practitioner?

No. However, supporting documentation from other clinicians can help the NDIA in its review.

What is 'duplication of supports' and how do I avoid them?

If 2 or more therapists are providing similar types of support to a participant, NDIS might find that only one of those therapy supports will be funded.

Is there evidence that music therapy works?

Yes. The independent review confirmed that music therapy can be effective and beneficial for people with disability, in the right circumstances - for example, where the person has a specific condition, the therapy is relevant to their goals, and the therapeutic support is delivered safely by an AMTA-registered music therapist. AMTA showed the review how music therapy can be effective for people with disability. The submission is on our website, along with a disability evidence summary.

Isn't music therapy still being reviewed?

Yes, but that's not just music therapy. The current government-led evidence review applies to other allied health services, too. While the new rules are being established, the NDIA is reviewing all requests for music therapy. It's important that NDIS participants and their carers, as well as NDIS planners and coordinators, know that music therapy remains an NDIS-funded therapeutic support.

Who can provide music therapy?

Under the NDIS rules, only registered music therapists with AMTA are eligible to deliver music therapy. To check whether a provider is a registered music therapist:

- Look for their AMTA-supplied registration badge or registration number.
- Search the online directory on the AMTA website.
- Email AMTA at info@austmta.org.au.

How does music therapy help people with disability?

- Music therapy is a therapeutic support delivered by a qualified registered music therapist who is certified with AMTA.
- Registered music therapists design and deliver individualised, music-based interventions to help achieve social, communicative, physical, sensory, emotional, cognitive and behavioural goals.
- Music therapy is different from recreational music or music lessons. It is goal-directed therapy tailored to a person's needs.

Explore AMTA's website for information about how music therapy can help people with disabilities.