# 2. The nuts and bolts of being an NDIS Champion

#### What will NDIS Champions do?

People with disabilities have not often been asked to provide information about the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to their peers and community. The AFDO NDIS Champions program has now created a group of people from all around Australia who can confidently provide information on the NDIS.

Congratulations – around 150 people applied for the positions and so a large number of people who would have been very good Champions have missed out. We will be taking the message to government as evidence of the number of people with disabilities who are ready, willing and able to work if only the opportunity was made available.

As an NDIS Champion, you are expected to be a source of information about the NDIS for your peers and local community. This means that you should be able to make speeches and presentations about the NDIS when you are asked to, and to be able to answer questions that come up along the way.

Of course, in two days we do not expect you to become experts in every detail about the NDIS. However, we do expect that you:

* Will learn and use the sample speech about the NDIS that we will give you
* Will learn how to use the NDIS website and Disability Loop website so you can find out more information about the NDIS
* Are able to promote yourself as an NDIS Champion and create opportunities to give speeches and presentations in your local community (and get paid for your time delivering these by AFDO)
* Will connect with the other NDIS Champions to help, support and encourage one another

The Disability Loop project team at AFDO will also be available to help, support and encourage you when you need it. We will also provide you with materials and resources to help build your knowledge and understanding of the NDIS.

In addition, we will help you promote yourselves as NDIS Champions, as speakers and presenters. We will also promote the NDIS Champions program more broadly as well as tell the NDIS about you in case they would like you to do presentations for them.

The responsibilities of an NDIS Champion

During September and October this year, you will be representing both yourselves and AFDO when you present as an NDIS Champion. Later on, it is hoped that the NDIA and other organisations may hire you to speak about the NDIS. In order to help this happen, we recommend that you work hard to establish your professionalism to maximise the chances of further work. Our suggestions are:

* Only use the information AFDO has provided you. This is because we have double-checked it and know that it is correct. It is also OK to use the exact information your get from the NDIS website or the Disability Loop website because this information has been checked as well. However, please do not try to interpret information differently as you might accidently change the meaning. Check with the Disability Loop project team at the AFDO office if you are unsure about this.
* It’s ok to say, “I don’t know” if you’re not sure what the answer to someone’s question is. It is better than pretending you do know the answer. We can help you find the right answer if the usual resources such as the NDIS website and Disability Loop website do not have the information you need.
* It is best not to express personal opinions in public. This means not saying something controversial, especially when you are speaking as an AFDO employee. Again, check with the Disability Loop project team at the AFDO office if you are unsure about this.
* Be professional in your attitude and dress.

The limitations of the NDIS Champion role

Although the NDIS Champion role is very important for spreading good quality information about the NDIS to people with disability, families and carers and the wider community, the role still has limitations. Please be aware that:

* You do not work for the National Disability Insurance Scheme or National Disability Insurance Agency. Even though you have ‘NDIS’ in your title, this does not mean that you work for or represent the Scheme in any way.
* You are expected to ‘spread the word’ about the NDIS in your local communities. Opportunities further afield should be offered to other Champions who live closer to the event. Note that AFDO will not be paying for any further travel for the NDIS Champions. As previously mentioned we will cover the costs of appropriate supports required for accessibility.
* The NDIS Champions initiative is part of the broader NDIS Disability Loop project being delivered by AFDO. This project finishes at the end of October this year (2016). This means that we will only be able to pay for your work for the next 8 weeks or so. After that, you will have to ask any people or organisations that want you to make a presentation to pay you directly.

#### How to get paid as an NDIS Champion

At AFDO we believe very strongly that people with disability should enjoy the same rights and responsibilities that everyone else in the community takes for granted. This naturally includes people with disability being paid for their work. And I am sure you are all aware that you were promised $30 per hour for your time, including these two days of training.

In the NDIS Champion Position Description we said that we wanted people to have their own Australian Business Number (ABN) and that the Champions would not become employees of AFDO. However, given that we have focused on ‘emerging leaders’, of course it turns out that people with less experience won't always have their own ABN. Therefore, we have decided that you will be allowed to become casual employees of AFDO because it is important that you can be paid.

how to get paid if you have an abn

For people who do have an ABN and would prefer us to pay via invoice, please provide AFDO with a Tax Invoice for the hours you work as an NDIS Champion – starting with the 16 hours of training this week. The invoice will need to include:

* The words ‘Tax Invoice’
* Your first name and last name
* Your contact details
* Your ABN
* The name of the business (if any)
* The hours worked
* GST (if applicable)
* The total amount owed

Please email your invoices to disabilityloop@afdo.org.au

how to get paid if you do not have an abn

If you do not have your own ABN, or access to an employer’s ABN, then AFDO will employ you as a casual employee. Casual employment allows people to work for an organsiation flexibly or for small amounts of time. Casual employees:

* Have no guaranteed hours of work
* Usually work irregular hours
* Do not get paid sick or annual leave
* Can end employment without notice

See link for more details [www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/types-of-employees/casual-part-time-and-full-time/casual-employees](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/types-of-employees/casual-part-time-and-full-time/casual-employees)

The NDIS Champions role is paid according to the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (also known as the SACS Award) Level 2 – paypoint 3. This level equates to pay of $24.14 per hour. With the 25% casual loading, this comes to $30.17 per hour.

See link for more details of the SACS Award [www.fairwork.gov.au/pay/minimum-wages/pay-guides#S](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/pay/minimum-wages/pay-guides#S)

#### Filling out forms

Unfortunately, being employed inevitablely means filling in forms. So, now I will talk you through the various forms and ask you to fill them in. Please indicate if you would like some help with these.

employment contract

Each NDIS Champion has been provided with two copies of your employment contact. Both employees and contractors have employment contracts. The contract sets out the details of your employment, including the rate of pay and the length of the contract. Note that all contracts conclude on 31 October 2016.

**ACTION:** Please sign the original document. The second copy is for your records.

employee details FORM

We would ask everyone to please fill in the Employee Details form (even if you plan to invoice us) so that we have your details on file for our accounts department. If you are planning to invoice us using an ABN, could you please write that down too.

**ACTION:** Please fill out the Employee Details form.

TAX FILE NUMBER DECLARATION FORM

Everyone who is not using an ABN will need to complete a Tax File Number Declaration form. This is an official form from the Australian Tax Office that gives AFDO the information we need to be able to pay you the correct amount as an employee. You will need to:

* Provide your Tax File Number
* Provide your personal details
* Decide if you want to claim the tax free threshold
* Decide if you want to claim any other tax offsets
* Know if you have a HELP, SSL or TSL debt

**ACTION:** Please fill out the TFN Declaration form.

superannuation fund nomination form

Everyone who is not using an ABN will need to complete a Superannuation Fund Nomination form. This is also an official form from the Australian Tax Office that gives AFDO the information we need to be able to pay any applicable superannuation to the Fund of your choice. To do this you will need to:

* Provide your Tax File Number
* Provide your personal details
* Provide the name of your superannuation fund
* Provide the ABN of your superannuation fund
* Provide your member account name

**ACTION:** Please fill out the Superannuation Fund Nomination form.

afdo expense form

While you are employed by AFDO as an NDIS Champion, you may sometimes need to pay for something first and then send AFDO the receipt so we can pay you back. This is called reimbursement. AFDO will reimburse all appropriate accessibility supports such as short taxi fares to venues or Auslan interpretation.

The AFDO Expense form must be filled in for each expense, and the original tax invoice attached. Please note that a credit card receipt is not always a tax invoice. You have been provided with 5 copies of the form, but feel free to make more if you need to.

**ACTION:** If you already have taxi receipts, please fill out an Expense form.

timesheets

All NDIS Champions will be asked to complete a timesheet with all the hours you have worked, so the AFDO accounts department can calculate your pay.

Each timesheet will need your full name and the hours you worked that week or fortnight. It will also need to be signed.

Again, you have been provided with 5 copies, but feel free to make more if you need to.

**ACTION:** Please fill out a timesheet for the 16 hours of training.

#### What is paid work time?

As we said in the Position Description and interviews, we expect the amount of work you will do as an NDIS Champion will be in the range of 20 to 30 hours in total.

Up to 31 October 2016 AFDO will pay for:

* All training time (including the current 16 hours)
* Any additional teleconferences/meetings/training required by AFDO (we may ask you to watch and/or listen to some online training videos that we currently have in production)
* An hour of preparation time for each presentation
* The time it takes to deliver each presentation (if less than one hour, we will pay for one hour)
* Unusually long travel time (more than half an hour each way) with prior written approval
* Unusually long research time (that extends preparation time by more than half an hour) with prior written approval

In general AFDO will not pay for:

* Travel time to a presentation venue
* Preparation time / research greater than one hour
* Time doing social media promotion

Any extra payment for this requires written approval in advance.

#### Health and safety

workcover

All AFDO employees are covered under the AFDO WorkCover policy. This is insurance in the unlikely event that a worker is injured or becomes ill because of their work.

Please note that NDIS Champions who are working under their own ABN or another employers ABN are not covered by AFDO’s WorkCover policy. AFDO recommends that all NDIS Champions ensure that they are covered by an employers WorkCover insurance, or their own private insurance in case of accident or injury.

staying safe and healthy

AFDO is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of the working environment for its staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors. We want to keep you safe and healthy.

The formal AFDO Occupational Health and Safety policy is included in your pack for you to read in your own time.

It states that as employees, you have a responsibility to check for hazards – such as tripping hazards like electrical leads, extension cords and bags. All leads should always be tucked out of sight or taped to the floor like you can see here.

The other risk management you may need to think about is your personal safety if attending an event on your own, especially at night. It is a good idea to:

* Check in with someone (e.g. a family member) by text ot phone when you arrive and when you are leaving so that they can follow up if you are late.
* Always have the name and number of the person you are meeting at the venue so you can contact them if something goes wrong.

#### The NDIS Champion role in the future

The NDIS Champions initiative has been designed as a launch pad opportunity for you all. We very much hope that with our support and promotion combined with your local networks and effort that we can bring in some genuine work opportunities for you.

Even though being an NDIS Champion may turn out to be a short-term role for you, we also hope that it helps you be prepared to do this sort of thing independently in the future.

NDIS Champions communication

Although most of you will be casual employees of AFDO, you will not be provided with an AFDO email address or AFDO business cards. This is because you will only be paid by AFDO for a few weeks, and then it is hoped that you will continue to gain work privately. Therefore it is better for you to start establishing yourselves independently as soon as possible.

Therefore we would advise you to have a professional sounding email address for people to contact you on. Nicknames such as snookems@gmail.com do not encourage the NDIA to take you seriously as a speaker!

#### Impact on Disability Support Pension

During the Champions recruitment period quite a number of people were concerned about the effect that getting paid would have on their Disability Support Pension (DSP) payments.

A responsibility that goes with working is making sure you understand your own financial position. This keeps you safe from anyone keeping or taking money from you. An important thing to understand about the DSP is that any extra money you earn always makes you better off.

We have drawn a graph for you to show this. On the graph you can see the DSP for a person receiving a single pension with supplements is $873.90 per fortnight. A person can earn $164 per fortnight without any affect on their pension. After that, a person receiving the DSP will lose 50 cents for every dollar of income they earn.

The graph shows that when you earn money on top of the DSP that you are better off – even though the amount of your pension goes down?

This is why AFDO is paying you properly for your time. Your work is valuable and should be acknowledged in the same way as everyone else’s is – through payment.

It is true that once you earn more than $164 per fortnight that some other things become more complicated – such as you may need to notify Centrelink when you earn money and you may need to pay tax. But, as accountants say, a tax problem is a great problem. Because if you have to pay tax it means you are earning quite a bit of money.

Of course, there are other benefits that come with receiving the DSP, so you might need to be careful not to earn more that the top cut off point of around $1,900 per fortnight so that you don’t lose these.

We would encourage you to get your own advice on these issues, but at the same time to be aware of your own finances and be in charge!