

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## HCANZA Calls for Recognition of Health Coaches in NDIS Framework

Chair of the Health Coaches Australia and New Zealand Board says she has great empathy with Music and Art Therapists who support people with a disability under the guidelines of the NDIS.

A new operational guideline relating to therapy supports by the NDIS has put both Music and Art Therapists on the outer when it comes to care with people with a disability.

Health Coaches Australia and New Zealand Association (HCANZA) Board Chair, Linda Funnell-Milner says her organisation expresses deep concern over this decision, but also over the exclusion of appropriately accredited health coaches from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) framework. HCANZA accredited health coaches are highly qualified for their role in supporting patients and their families with therapies which are science based, and research supported.

“The exclusion of HCANZA-accredited health coaches from the NDIS framework is a significant oversight that could negatively impact the quality of life for many Australians living with disabilities. Our coaches provide essential support in achieving health and wellness goals, operating within Core Supports and Capacity Building areas,” Ms Funnell-Milner said.

“HCANZA accredited health coaches are highly qualified for their role in supporting patients and their families with therapies which are science based, and research supported.”

HCANZA emphasises that health coaching, when delivered by accredited professionals, is an evidence-based practice that can significantly enhance participants' overall well-being, fostering independence and self-efficacy and building skills for the present and confidence in selfcare for the future. HCANZA members in New Zealand are working in an environment which is supported by the New Zealand government which has employed Health Coaches in every general practice since 2022.

"We are committed to maintaining high professional standards and are well-equipped to contribute positively to the NDIS landscape," Ms Funnell-Milner said. "Our accredited coaches operate under a rigorous code of ethics and stringent standards designed to ensure safe, effective, and client-centred care."

HCANZA is advocating for:

1. Recognition of HCANZA-accredited health coaches within the NDIS framework
2. Inclusion of health coaching in funding models as part of chronic disease or mental health care plans
3. A shift towards a preventive health-based model in primary care as well as enabling patients to be actively involved in the health journey through patient centred care models.

The association is actively engaging with NDIS decision-makers to advocate for health coaching's inclusion in funding frameworks, emphasizing its role in achieving participant goals and improving health outcomes.

**END**

For more information, please contact

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## **Media Briefing Paper**

### **Background**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has recently made decisions to exclude certain therapeutic supports, including health coaching provided by HCANZA-accredited professionals. This decision mirrors the controversial funding cuts to music therapy, raising concerns about the future of various therapeutic supports within the NDIS framework [1].

### **Key Points:**

1. **Evidence-Based Practice:** HCANZA-accredited Health and Wellness Coaches operate under stringent standards, consistent with international standards, and a code of ethics, ensuring evidence-based, safe, and effective care.
2. **Impact on NDIS Participants:** Health coaching can significantly enhance participants' overall well-being, foster independence, and improve health outcomes.
3. **Alignment with NDIS Goals:** Health coaching aligns with NDIS objectives by supporting participants in achieving their health and wellness goals within Core Supports and Capacity Building areas.
4. **Cost-Effective Solution:** Inclusion of health coaching could potentially reduce reliance on GPs and allied health professionals, improving access to behavioural change support and reducing healthcare delivery costs.
5. **International Recognition:** Countries like the UK, US, and New Zealand have integrated health coaching into their healthcare systems, recognizing its value in improving patient outcomes.



### **HCANZA's Position**

HCANZA is advocating for:

1. Recognition of HCANZA-accredited health coaches within the NDIS framework
2. Inclusion of health coaching in funding models
3. A shift towards a preventive health-based model in primary care, that puts the patient at the centre of their health journey decision making and commitment.

Quote from Linda Funnell-Milner, HCANZA Board Chair

"The exclusion of HCANZA-accredited health coaches from the NDIS framework overlooks a valuable resource that could significantly improve the lives of Australians with disabilities. We are committed to working collaboratively with the NDIS to ensure that our services are fully understood and considered as an effective, evidence-based addition to NDIS supports."

### **Additional Information:**

HCANZA is prepared to provide research studies, documented outcomes, and professional guidelines demonstrating the effectiveness of health coaching for individuals with disabilities.

-The association is seeking clarification on the specific evidence required for health coaching services to be recognized as evidence-based under NDIS standards.

### **Contact Information:**

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