



NDIS Client Survey 2017

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INTRODUCTION

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a recent support system for Australians with disability, their families and carers. It is an independent statutory agency that transitioned some states and territories of Australia from as early 2013. With its ongoing progress, it is expected for the full scheme to roll out in all states and territories (except WA) from July 2016. The purpose of NDIS is ensuring people up to age of 65 with the paramount support they need, and facilitated changes to the existing disability support systems. These changes range from mainstream service supports from doctors, teachers, public housing commissions, justice systems and age care systems. It also affects access to community services and supports like sports clubs, libraries, community groups, and community transports.

Depending upon an individual's specific circumstance, a participant will primarily benefit from funding through the NDIS for transport assistance if the person is proven incapable of using public transport and experiences substantial difficulty due to their disability. Funding will go directly to an individual to be used for transport services of their choice.

The development of this scheme will certainly alter how funding will be distributed to public service companies such as government profit, non-profit, privately-own or commercial institutions. South West Community Transport (SWCT) a non-profit organisation is an example of this. It is currently funded under the Home and Community Care Program to provide transport for residents living within the Camden, Campbelltown, Wollondilly, Liverpool and Fairfield districts. With their funding being transitioned to NDIS, full cost recovery for fuel, repair and replacement of vehicles will change. As a result, the cost of services for community transport clients will most likely surge within the upcoming years.

For this reason, SWCT moved to inform their client base about these changes taking place, and how it will affect clients' access of services. A considerable way of distributing this information as well as keeping track of how well their clients are informed is by conducting a survey. This survey will be complete by three Occupational Therapy students from Western Sydney University.

The survey will be conducted to establish SWCT client's awareness of the introduction of the NDIS, their eligibility, the transport components of their packages and if the scheme meets their specific service needs.

AIM

The survey was conducted in order to obtain feedback on how the introduction of the NDIS has impacted on clients of SWCT who are under 65. This survey was conducted on clients who use SWCT as their means of transport to commute to different activities during the past 6 months. The goal of the survey was to achieve 10% of the 1515 telephone calls to the clients that falls under the age range category.

After the conclusion of the survey, further recommendations for clients and SWCT will be established in order to increase knowledge and education of NDIS. Also, the survey can be used to acknowledge the appropriate assistance that SWCT can provide for their clients.

The survey will produce a hard copy and electronic resources that SWCT can use for future reference regarding clients' needs as well as rallying for government support.

METHODOLOGY

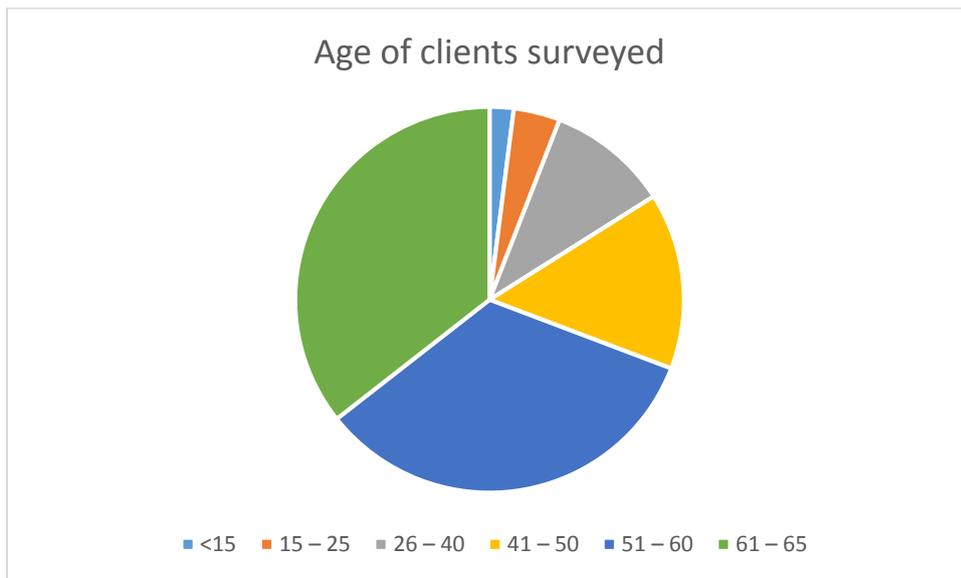
The survey was conducted through telephone calls to clients of SWCT that are under the age of 65 and have a moderate to severe disability that is permanent. SWCT categorises their clients based on mobility into high, medium and low groups. The survey will start with the clients in the high group and depending on time restrictions will affect the completion of medium and low groups. The methods used in this survey included personal research, group research, data collection and data analysis.

A total of 750 clients were surveyed. 10% of the total client base, being 1515, was necessary to be contacted to reliably complete the survey. To maximise the response rates and avoid running out of time, we attempted to telephone the clients on two separate occasions, if unable to reach them the first time. All surveys were conducted in English language over the phone from the 21st of March 2017 to the 2nd of May 2017. The information gained from the surveys was collated by three Western Sydney University Occupational Therapy students from the 3rd of May 2017 to the 19th of May 2017.

CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS

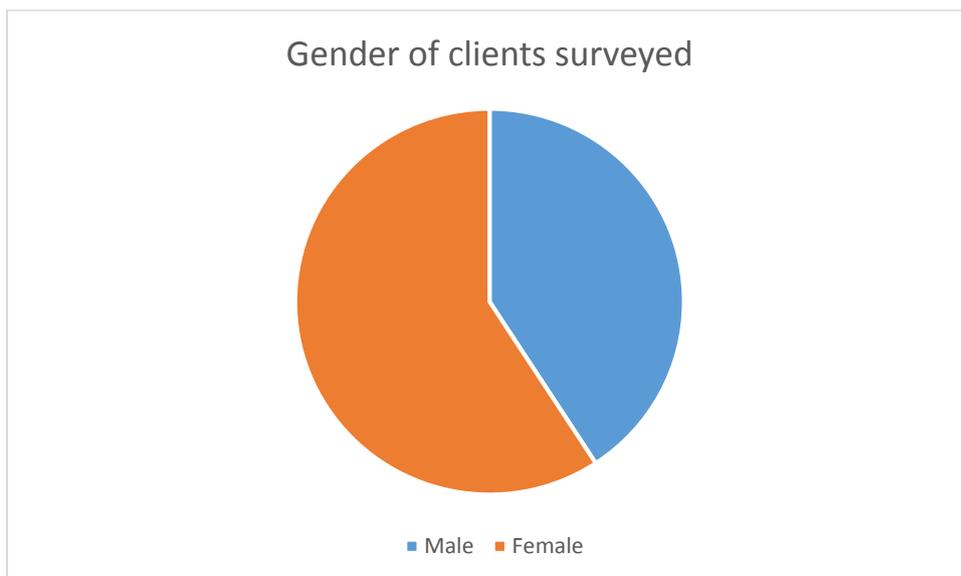
AGE

South West Community Transport provides individuals under the age of 65 with a moderate to severe permanent disability to access the community bus service. For the purpose of the survey, the ages were broken into six categories; under 15, 15-25, 26-40, 41-50, 51-60 and 61-65. The largest category was 61-65 with 35.6%.



GENDER

From the clients surveyed, 40.8% are male and 59.2% are female.

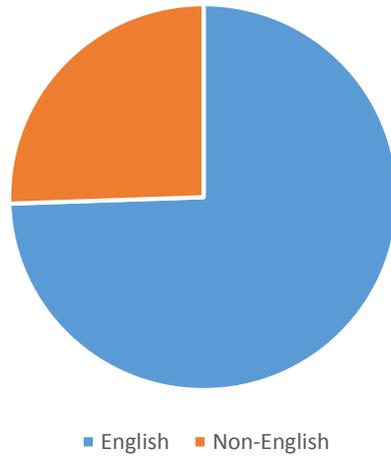


LANGUAGE

Out of the clients called, there was a large number of languages spoken. Majority of the clients, 74.3%, were of English speaking background. After that, the most spoken languages were Arabic with 14.5% and Vietnamese with 4.8%. This made the survey challenging due to not having an interpreter present and often clients with language barriers could not fulfil the questions.

Arabic	109	14.5
Assyrian Neo-Aramaic	1	0.1
Cantonese	6	0.8
Chinese, nec	3	0.4
English	557	74.3
Greek	1	0.1
Hindi	4	0.5
Italian	1	0.1
Khmer	2	0.3
Macedonian	2	0.3
Maltese	1	0.1
Mandarin	3	0.4
Not stated	11	1.5
Polish	1	0.1
Samoan	5	0.6
Serbian	1	0.1
Somali	1	0.1
Spanish	2	0.3
Thai	1	0.1
Vietnamese	36	4.8

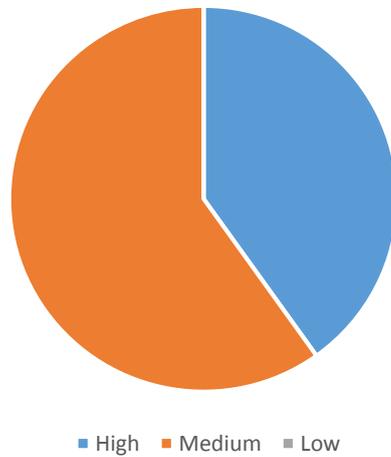
Language of Clients surveyed



PRIORITY

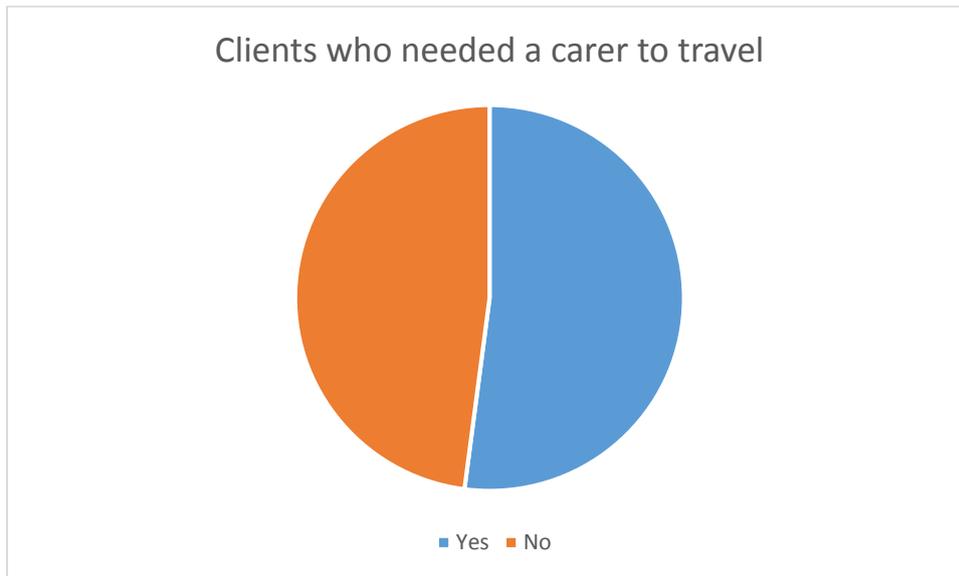
South West Community Transport categorises clients based on mobility into high, medium and low. Due to time restraints, there was an inability to be able to survey the low category clients. Out of the clients surveyed, 40.1% were high and 59.9% were medium.

Priority of clients surveyed



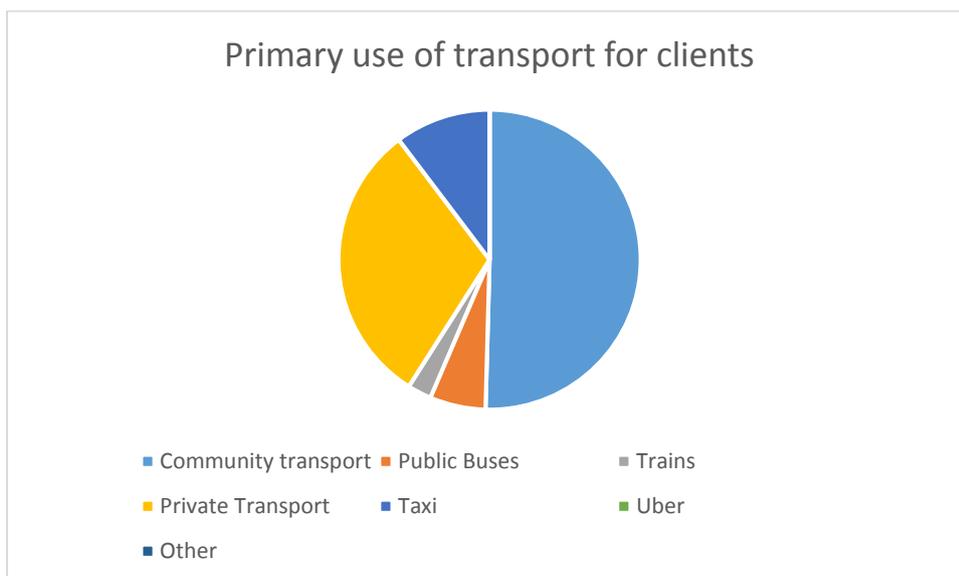
CARER

South West Community Transport provides the opportunity to allow for a carer to travel with clients on their services. Often, it is necessary for clients to travel with a carer due to their disability or age. It is noted that 52.1% of clients surveyed required a carer either on all or some trips made.



PRIMARY USE OF TRANSPORT

From the survey, it was important to develop an understanding of the primary transport that the clients used. Out of the clients surveyed, majority, 50.4%, used community transport and 30.8% used private transport.



RESULTS

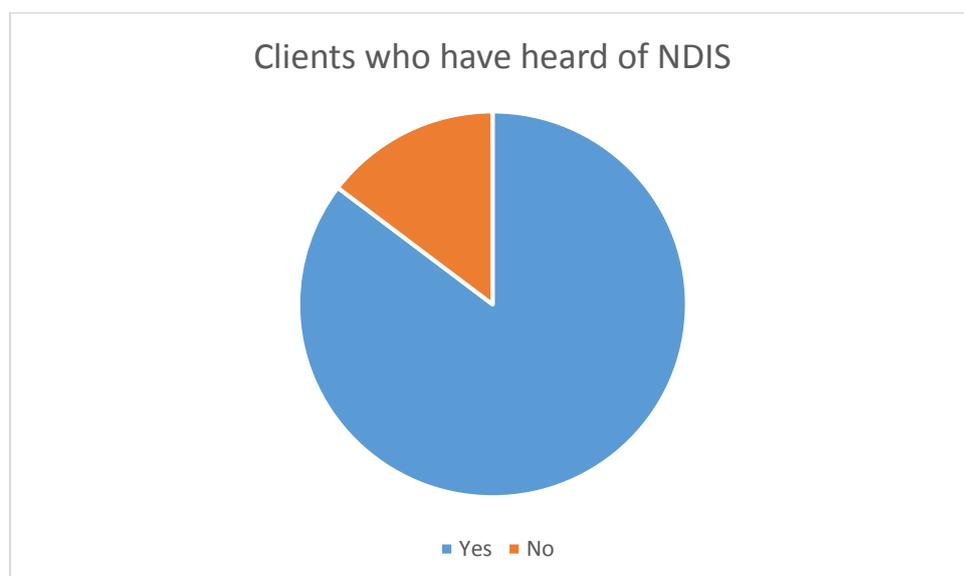
PARTICIPATION

A total of 750 out of 1515 client base were contacted from the period 21st of March 2017 to 2nd of May 2017. This means 49.5% clients were contacted. 62.9% of the clients contacted did not answer the call after 2 attempts of contact. From the remaining number of clients, 20.3% agreed to participate for the survey, and 16.8% declined to partake.



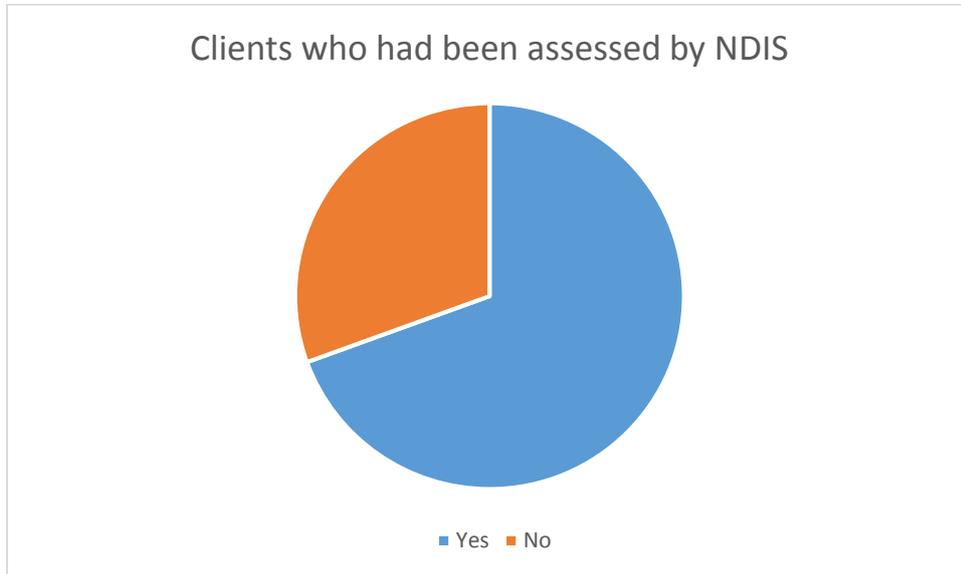
CLIENTS WHO HAVE HEARD OF NDIS

Among the willing participants, 85.3% indicated to have heard of NDIS before either through the NDIS website, another online media, television, radio, or word of mouth. A difference of 14.7% stated to have never heard of the scheme prior to the survey.



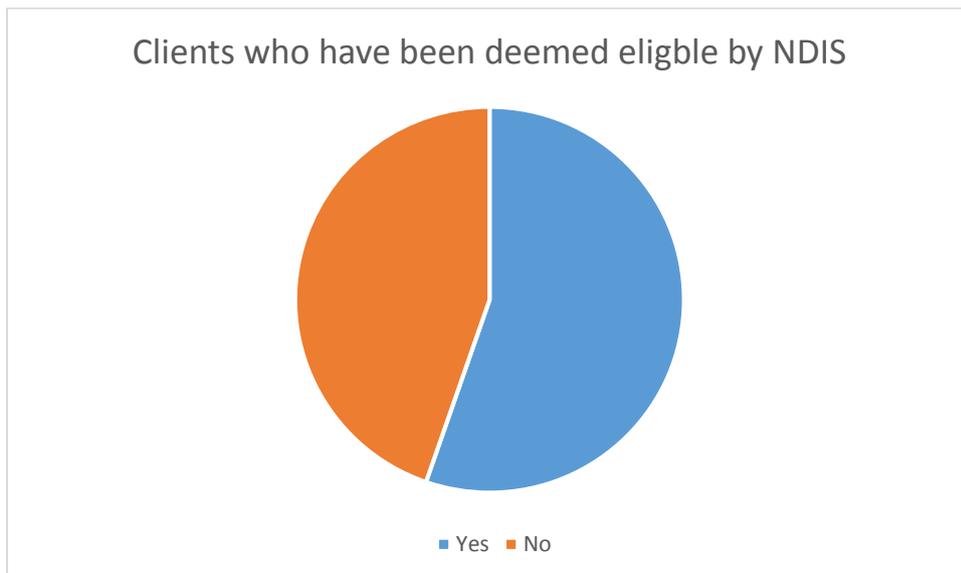
CLIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ASSESSED BY NDIS

69.4% of the agreed participants identified themselves to have already been assessed for the disability insurance scheme. The remaining 30.6% denoted to have not been assessed prior to the survey.



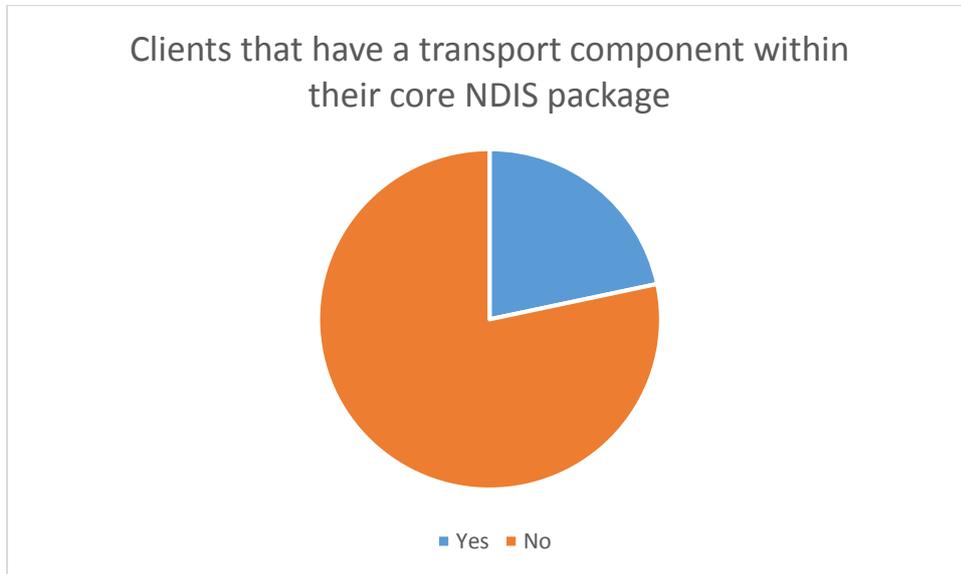
CLIENTS WHO ARE DEEMED ELIGIBLE BY NDIS

Amid the clients that indicated to have already been assessed, 55.3% were deemed eligible for the scheme. The outstanding ratio of 44.7% related to have not qualified with the criteria/criterion of the scheme.



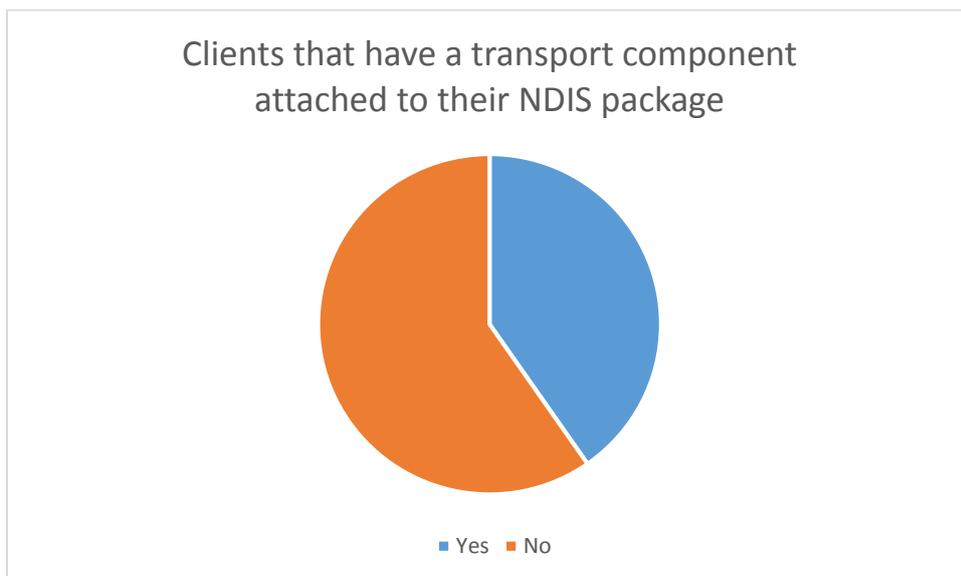
CLIENTS THAT HAVE A TRANSPORT COMPONENT WITHIN THEIR CORE NDIS PACKAGE

Also within the eligible clients, 21.7% mentioned to have been entitled to a transport component in their core packages. The remaining 78.3% stated otherwise.



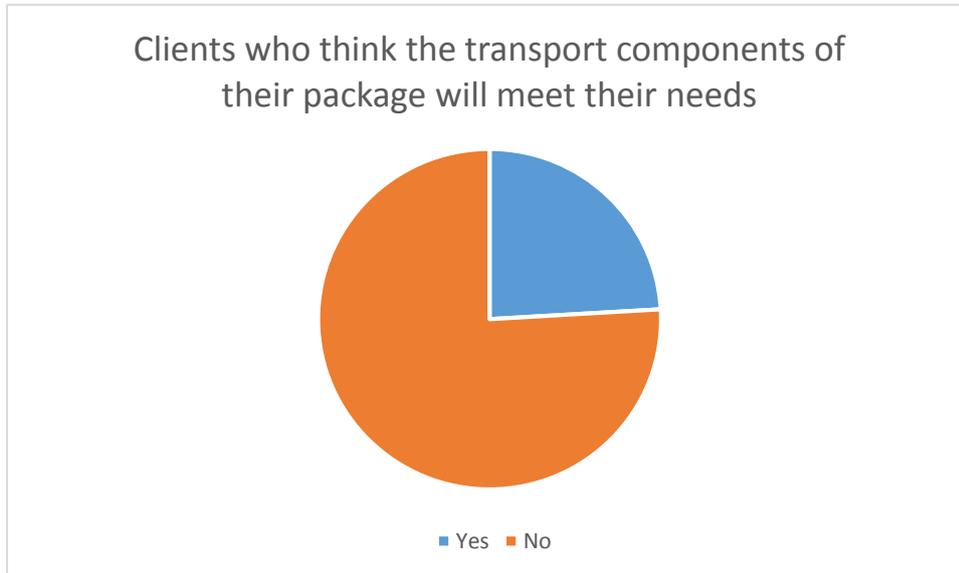
CLIENTS THAT HAVE A TRANSPORT COMPONENT ATTACHED TO THEIR NDIS PACKAGE

Within the fraction of eligible clients, 40.3% specified to have a transport component attached to their package. 59.7% of clients on the other hand stated to not having a transport component on their NDIS packages.



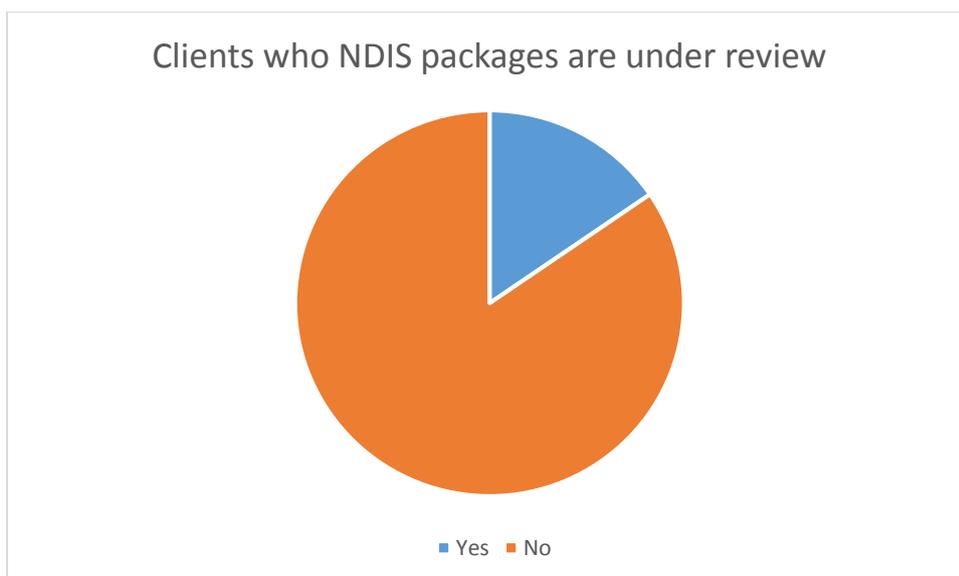
CLIENTS WHO THINK THE TRANSPORT COMPONENTS OF THEIR PACKAGE WILL MEET THEIR NEEDS

24.1% of the eligible individuals, stated that their package will sustain their transport needs either through a community transport company or other permitted options. The outstanding 75.9% stated that the transport package will not meet their needs.



CLIENTS WHO NDIS PACKAGES ARE UNDER REVIEW

A small percentage of 15.5% of the clients surveyed have made known that they have a package currently under review. 84.5% suggested otherwise.



CONCLUSION

From the survey, it can be determined that the introduction of NDIS will impact the transportation needs of the clients of SWCT. Funding is a crucial aspect of change due to the introduction of NDIS, both to clients of SWCT as well as the SWCT organisation.

From the survey, it has been established that NDIS has not yet assisted all SWCT clients. Statistics show that 14.7% of clients have not heard of NDIS prior to the survey. This draws questions as to why the clients haven't previously been made aware of NDIS. Furthermore, this can be demonstrated through the 30.6% of clients surveyed who have not been assessed for a NDIS package. Likewise, 44.7% of clients that have been assessed for NDIS have been deemed ineligible to receive a package. These clients that do not have support from NDIS will have to self-fund their transport through SWCT or find other means of transportation. Therefore, this demonstrates the impact that NDIS will have both on clients and SWCT organisation.

Although an indicative percentage of clients receive transport packages either attached or within their core package, it doesn't necessarily mean that the clients are satisfied with the funding or confident that it will meet their transport needs. It is noted from the survey that 75.9% of clients deemed eligible for NDIS believed that their NDIS transport package will not meet their transport needs. Hence, this will change individuals' ability to access community participation.

Finally, the introduction of NDIS will impact on the clients of SWCT shown through the surveys that have been conducted. Due to the changes of funding, it can be established that the quality of life, community participation and independence of clients will be impacted by the inability to access transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results gathered from the survey conducted, further recommendations can be established in order to provide a sound transition of clients to NDIS, continual support for individuals who currently have a package or those who were deemed ineligible.

The recommendations that were found to be substantial include:

- Ongoing information/education for clients transitioned to NDIS
- Support for individuals transitioning to NDIS
- Identify alternate pathways for individuals with insufficient funds for services
 - Clients deemed illegible
 - Clients who use their package before 12 month period
- Offer other options of transport
 - Travel training for public transport access
- Encouraging individual clients to provide SWCT with feedback on the issues relating to their NDIS package
- Ongoing petitioning to raise awareness of issues