

Navigating Funding & Choosing the Right High-Sided Bed: A Three-Part Guide

Applying for funding and selecting the right assistive equipment can feel overwhelming, but we're here to help. In this three-part guide, we'll lead you through the process:

Part One | [Page 2](#)

Simplifying the Funding Process: From Assessment to Application

We'll break down the funding application process in Australia, covering everything from assessments and goal-setting to completing your application with confidence.

Part Two | [Page 4](#)

From Selection to Setup: A Guide to High-Sided Beds

We'll explore the various options for high-sided beds, including the Safe Surround and Safespaces ranges. You'll find practical tips to help you choose the best fit for your loved one, along with key considerations for delivery and setup to ensure a seamless experience.

Part Three | [Page 8](#)

Tips for Completing an NDIS Assistive Technology Application for a High-Sided Bed

We'll share ten expert tips and tricks to help ensure your application is a success.

Part One: Simplifying the Funding Process: From Assessment to Application

Who provides funding for high-sided beds in Australia?

Launched in Australia in 2016, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has transformed the lives of people with disabilities and their support networks. The NDIS provides funding to eligible people for equipment and support that they require, providing it meets all reasonable and necessary criteria.



Applying for Funding: What's the Process?

1. Assessment with an AT Advisor

The first step in exploring options for high-sided beds is to undertake a thorough assessment with a prescribing assistive technology (AT) advisor. This is typically an occupational therapist or physiotherapist, who can assess the individual's unique needs and recommend the most suitable solution.

The assessment helps everyone understand what's not working about the current bed and sleeping environment. Some examples might include:

Safety concerns:

- The person needs assistance to safely transfer to or from their bed.
- There is a risk of them trying to leave the property overnight.
- They can access certain areas of the home which usually require supervision, e.g. the kitchen.

Behaviours of concern:

- The person has a history of hitting or banging body parts on their bed, which lacks any padding to help minimise the risk or severity of injury.

Risk of burn-out for informal supports:

- The person's informal supports may be experiencing broken or limited sleep due to being up at night redirecting them back to bed. This can make it difficult to manage other responsibilities, such as maintaining employment, and may ultimately jeopardise their ability to continue providing care at home.

Manual handling risks:

- Personal care activities on the current bed could put others at risk of injuries due to its height, which can cause poor posture or extra strain during transfers.

Incompatibility with other equipment:

- The person might need a bed with enough clearance underneath to fit a mobile hoist.
- They might need a bed without a canopy to allow for transfer equipment to be used during care routines.
- A wheelchair user can't get close enough to their child's bed to help them with everyday tasks like getting dressed or share special moments like reading a bedtime story together.

2. Trial Alternative Solutions

As part of the assessment, it's important to trial lower cost or less restrictive options which could address the issues with the current bed and sleep space. This is a crucial step, as if you're hoping to apply for NDIS funding to purchase a high-sided bed, your AT advisor will need to include the options have already been trialled and explain why these were not successful.

3. Set Measurable Goals

Now the assessment process is complete, the next step is to work with your AT advisor to set some clear and measurable goals, specific to the activity of sleep. These goals will play another important role in your funding application – your AT advisor will need to demonstrate how the recommended bed aligns with these goals to achieve the desired outcomes when they write the application.

4. Understanding Restrictive Practices: What to Do if You're Considering a High-Sided Bed

You may have heard that a high-sided bed is considered a restrictive practice, but don't worry, we're here to explain what that means and what steps you need to take.

The NDIS rules say that restrictive practices should only be used as a last resort, when necessary to reduce risks of harm to the person or others. If your loved one doesn't already have a Behaviour Support Practitioner, they'll need to be referred for Positive Behaviour Support. This process helps to understand why certain behaviours happen, by consulting with the person, their family, carers, and other support networks.

After the assessment, the Behaviour Support Practitioner will create a Positive Behaviour Support Plan. This plan will outline strategies to improve your loved one's quality of life and may include the use of the Safe Surround Genie or Plus bed, or an option from Safespaces. It's important that the therapist notes which other options were considered before choosing this bed, as the NDIS requires this information.

To ensure everything runs smoothly, the Positive Behaviour Support Plan should be included with the assistive technology assessment. It's crucial that the Safe Surround or Safespaces bed is mentioned in the plan – if it's not, it could cause delays in the NDIS processing your application.

If there are delays in accessing a Behaviour Support Practitioner due to waitlists, you can still submit the application for the bed. Just make sure the report clearly explains why the bed is needed and what attempts have been made to access Positive Behaviour Support services.

5. Complete the Application

When applying for NDIS funding for a Safe Surround or Safespace bed (which are valued over \$15,000), it's important to complete a full application. A supporting letter from a therapist alone won't be enough for high-cost items like these and could increase the chances that your funding request is declined. Your assistive technology advisor will need to use the NDIS application template to apply for funding.



Part Two: From Selection to Setup: A Guide to High-Sided Beds

How do I know which high-sided bed is most suitable?

A question Medifab often hears from families and therapists is: 'What are the key differences between the Safe Surround and Safespaces products?'

At first glance, the beds in each range might look quite similar, but there are some important differences in their design and functionality. Understanding these differences is essential to make sure you're choosing the right model for your family member or client.

To make this process a little easier, we've put together a simple table below that highlights the key features of each range, so you and your AT prescriber can confidently decide which option is best suited to your needs.

High-Sided Bed Comparison Chart

	Safe Surround Genie Bed	Safe Surround Plus Bed	Safespace	Safespace Hi-Lo	Voyager	Cosyfit	Cosyfit Hi-Lo
Type of bed	Height-adjustable bed	Height-adjustable bed	Soft, flexible room	Height-adjustable bed	Travel bed	High-sided bed	Height-adjustable bed
How tall are the sides on the bed/room?	98 cm	135 or 170 cm	169 cm	113 cm	161 cm	107, 122 or 147 cm	107, 122 or 147 cm
Is the bed/room full enclosed?	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Does the bed have clearance underneath?	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Does the bed have hi-lo functionality?	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Does the sleep surface have profiling functionality? (e.g. head raise, knee break)	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Can the panels open on both sides of the bed?	✓	✗	Custom specification at time of order	✓	✓	✓	✓
Can you add padding to the panels and the rails?	✓	✓	All Safespaces beds come standard with soft sides - no sharp edges or solid surfaces are within reach of the user				

The assessment process is super helpful for figuring out which features are important, and which aren't as necessary. Setting clear goals can make it easier to narrow down your options and find the perfect bed for your family member's needs.

Who might be suitable for each type of bed?

	Safe Surround Genie Bed: • People with higher physical support needs, where caregivers may need easy access to both sides of the bed for personal care. • Parents who use wheelchairs or caregivers who need mobile transfer equipment, thanks to the Genie Bed's under-bed clearance for easier access.
	Safe Surround Plus Bed: • Individuals who may be at risk of climbing over high bed railings, as the bed can be customised with doors up to 170 cm for added safety.
	Safespace: • People with complex needs including autism, epilepsy and behaviours of concern.
	Safespace Hi-Lo: • Individuals with complex needs and limited mobility. Its durable design accommodates individuals who may engage in thrashing, pushing, kicking, or self-injurious behaviours. • Sealed, waterproof edges provide protection against incontinence and smearing. • Those at risk of climbing over the sides can benefit from the added safety of the mesh ceiling.
	Cosyfit: • People with mobility and complex needs including autism, epilepsy, behaviours of concern and learning difficulties. Its robust design makes it suitable for those who rock, thrash, push or kick.
	Cosyfit Hi-Lo: • Individuals with limited mobility who require personal or nursing care. It provides a safe sleep environment with the flexibility of a height adjustable platform providing a comfortable working height for carers.
	Voyager: • People with complex needs including autism, epilepsy, behaviours of concern and learning difficulties. This can include those who are uncomfortable in unfamiliar surroundings or those are used to a Safespace at home.

Our friendly and knowledgeable team is always here to listen and help guide you and your AT advisor in selecting the bed that best fits your needs, goals, and requirements.

What international standards do the beds meet?

Safe Surround beds:

- DIN EN 32623:2002 – Children's hospital beds made of metal and plastics
- DIN EN 1970:2000 – Adjustable beds for disabled persons
- DIN EN 60601-2-28:2001 – Medical electrical equipment, Section 2-38: specific safety regulations for electrically operated hospital beds
- DIN EN 60601-1:1996 – Medical electrical equipment, Section 1 General safety regulations

Safespaces beds:

- Each Safespace product complies with various standards and regulations that differs between each Safespaces product. Refer to technical specifications on the Safespaces website to find out the specific standards compliance for each product.



Preparing Your Environment for a Perfect Fit

Along with choosing a solution that meets the person's needs or goals, it's just as important to think about the space where it will be used.

We want to make sure it fits perfectly and works smoothly in the environment when it's delivered or set up!



Some things to think about are:

The Ceiling Height:

- Standard ceilings are 2.4m, but many homes have lower ceilings. Air conditioners, ceiling fans or pendant lights may need to be moved before delivery and set up. A laser measure is the easiest way to get an accurate ceiling height – these are available in hardware stores.

Overall Footprint:

- Think about how the bed will be used day-to-day. For instance, will both sides need to be accessible? For example, the overall footprint of the Genie Bed when its doors are open, so it's not suitable to use against a wall. It's a good idea to check for obstacles that may prevent the door from fully opening, like wardrobe doors. Ensure there's enough room for caregivers to easily access both sides for personal care or transfers.

Minimum Clearance Requirements:

- For Safespace beds, it's essential to meet the minimum clearance requirements for the front/back panels and head/foot panels. These vary depending on the option selected. You can find all the details on our website or the Safespaces website.

Clearing the Room Ahead of Delivery:

- Safe Surround and Safespace beds (except the Safespaces Voyager) are assembled in the room where they'll be used. Ensure the existing bed is removed beforehand; scheduling delivery in the afternoon can give you time to clear the room in the morning. Check for tight hallways or corners that might obstruct moving large bed parts into the room. If your home has stairs or a lift, it's best to let us know ahead of delivery so we can get the information we need to ensure a smooth delivery.

Mattress and Linen:

- If you're considering a Safe Surround bed, it's important to note that the mattress dimensions are non-standard since they are imported from overseas. This means they're slightly between an Australian single and king single size. To ensure the best fit, we provide a mattress option tailored to the bed's dimensions. We also recommend using king single bed linen to guarantee a perfect match.

Part Three: Tips for Completing an NDIS Assistive Technology Application for a High-Sided Bed

1

Complete All NDIS Prompts:

- Fill in every prompt on the NDIS assistive technology assessment template. The NDIS needs all relevant details to make their funding decision.

2

Explain the Need in Clear, Everyday Language:

- Avoid jargon. Use simple, clear language to explain why the bed is necessary and how it will improve the client's quality of life and meet the client's goals. It's helpful to think of explaining it to a family member who's not familiar with assistive technology.

3

Ensure the Bed Meets NDIS “Reasonable and Necessary” Criteria:

- The NDIS will only fund supports that meet all key criteria, including:
 - For your disability needs: The bed must be necessary because of the impact of your disability (not a medical condition).
 - Supports your goals: The bed should help with personal goals and aspirations.
 - Helps with participation: It should assist in social or economic participation.
 - Value for money: If there are cheaper alternatives that achieve the same outcome, the NDIS won't fund the bed. You may need to compare the cost of the bed to the cost of other supports, such as overnight care.
 - Effective and beneficial: It must have a proven positive impact for the client.
 - Supports informal carers: The bed should also help family or other informal caregivers.

4

Highlight Non-Negotiable Features (Section 3.3.2):

- Be specific about any features of the high-sided bed or room that are essential. For example, if the person needs a solution without a canopy, explain why this is crucial for their comfort or safety.

5

Evaluate Other Options (Section 3.4):

- If you've considered other options (such as modifying the current bed or trying a different product), clearly explain why they aren't suitable. Record and compare these alternatives to justify why the high-sided bed you are recommending is the best choice.

6 Mention Lesser Restrictive Options:

- If there are other solutions, like bed alarms or floorline beds, that could address similar needs, mention them. This strengthens your case for why the high-sided bed is the most appropriate choice.

7 Client Feedback and Trials:

- Trials provide valuable insights into whether the bed will meet the client's needs. If possible, have your client try the bed or similar products. Some suppliers offer extended trials, sometimes at no extra cost.

8 Include Supporting Letters and Research:

- Your client or their caregivers can submit research or letters explaining their experiences with similar items, which can help reinforce the need for the bed. There is also a section for this information in the NDIS application template.

9 Obtain a Quote for the Bed:

- Get a detailed quote for the Safe Surround or Safespace bed and include it with your application to the NDIS. This will help the NDIS assess the cost for approval.

10 Follow Up on the Application:

- While the NDIS approval process may take time, it's a good idea to follow up after a couple of months. If additional information is requested, be prepared to provide it to help move the process along. By making sure your application is thorough and meets all of the NDIS criteria, you'll increase your chances of receiving the necessary funding for the Safe Surround or Safespace bed.