



Ben's mum Sam runs an NDIS Support Coordination business and is on the NDIS Independent Advisory Council. She shares how they used the NDIS to help start Ben's microenterprise.

Ben's plan is self-managed, which gives him the ultimate in flexibility on spending his plan funds, but this should be just as doable with a Plan Managed NDIS plan. Just check with your plan manager first.

Here are the steps we took to get Hazzah Apparel off the ground:

- 1** We used a local organisation in South Australia called Community Living Project to facilitate Ben's Microenterprise. They worked with Ben to figure out what he wanted his business to be.
- 2** Once Ben and the facilitator had decided on an apparel business, the facilitator then worked with both of us to build a project group, which is two of our neighbours (one is a graphic designer, another is an accountant) and a friend's husband who is an internet guru. They were all thrilled to help out as volunteers.
- 3** The project group (with Ben, and usually me) meet every 4-6 weeks to make the business decisions. The group helped the facilitator and Ben to interview the applicants for Ben's PA. The quality of applications was awesome – we didn't advertise for a support worker as such – we wanted someone with skills

in the business area. Dylan, a young and hip graphic designer, had never done any support work, but was and still is a natural fit for Ben. Sometimes he has a bit of extra support from the facilitator.

- 4** We use Ben's plan funds to pay the facilitator's organisation, who organises everyone, and for Dylan's work with Ben. We claim from a mix of Core and CB Employment. We do not claim anything for the actual business expenses that aren't related to his disability. The design software they use, and the iPad pencil etc. were paid from a float. I used my money to put in his business account to get them started. This has since been paid back through t-shirt and cap sales.
- 5** I have no idea whether the NDIS actually included money in Ben's plan to fund this (we did ask in his plan meeting and provided a quote), but it doesn't really matter as Ben prioritised his plan spending to support his microenterprise.

The business is just breaking even at this early stage. We only launched a few months ago, but we're all very hopeful that Christmas gift sales will mean that Ben can use his earnings to buy himself a new phone, and then start to save some money for his own home.

