
Disability homes scrap bus services, tell residents to take taxis, trains



Grant McArthur

March 6, 2026 – 11:26am



Listen to this article

5 min

One of the state’s largest disability service providers is withdrawing its transport services, telling residents they will need to use taxis and public transport to leave their homes from June 30.

Despite owning a fleet of specialised vehicles that are used by staff to help transport more than 1300 disabled residents under their care, Scope has ordered its managers to shift the cost of moving residents onto the National Disability Insurance Scheme due to financial pressures.

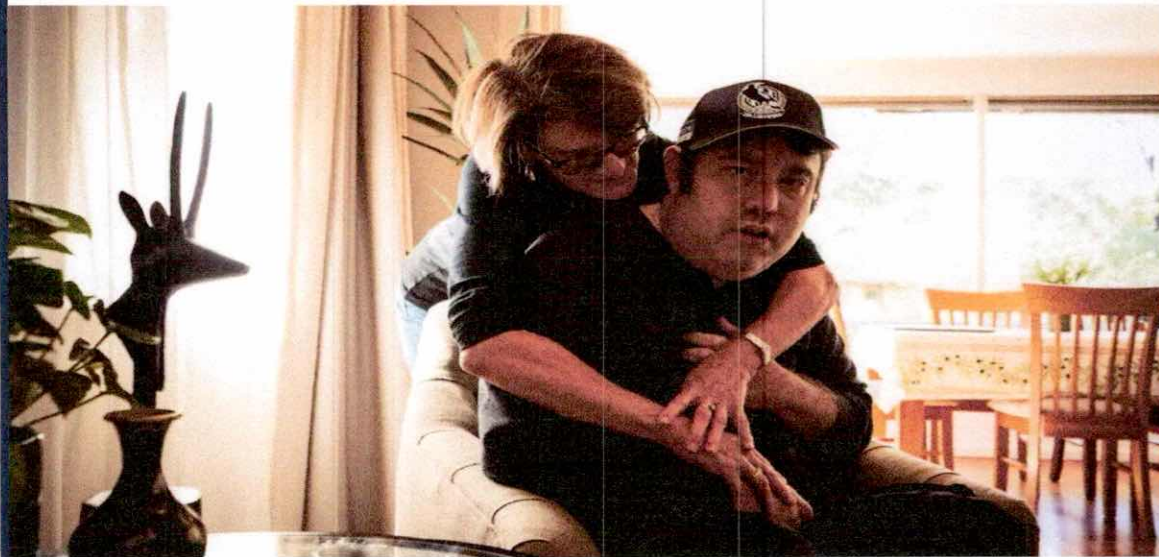


A specialist bus provided for free to Scope when it took over management of a state government-owned Camberwell disability home, which Scope is now attempting to sell to the home’s new managers.

There is also one instance of Scope attempting to sell off one of its specialist buses to other NDIS providers – even though the Victorian government gave the vehicles to Scope for free.

The transport withdrawal comes as several [disability service providers struggle for survival](#) after state government subsidies ended on December 31. The subsidies had covered the higher wages and running costs associated with operating the homes that used to be in Victorian government hands and are not fully covered by the NDIS.

RELATED ARTICLE



Exclusive Disability

‘They’re gaslighting us’: More disability homes close as state funding ends

In an email to its operations bosses, Scope’s acting chief operating officer Nicole Standfield said “providing transport without funding or without billing clients has become financially unsustainable” across its 348 supported independent-living homes.

Standfield said organisations had to transition away from the past practice of driving people to and from their homes because the NDIS only provides a transport allowance directly to residents, not to home providers.

“These changes are essential to keeping Scope financially sustainable so we can continue delivering high-quality services for clients over the long term,”

Standfield's email said.

As previously revealed by *The Age*, more than 80 former government-run group homes for disabled residents have been closed by the five private providers appointed to take over Victoria's supported disability accommodation due to financial pressures.

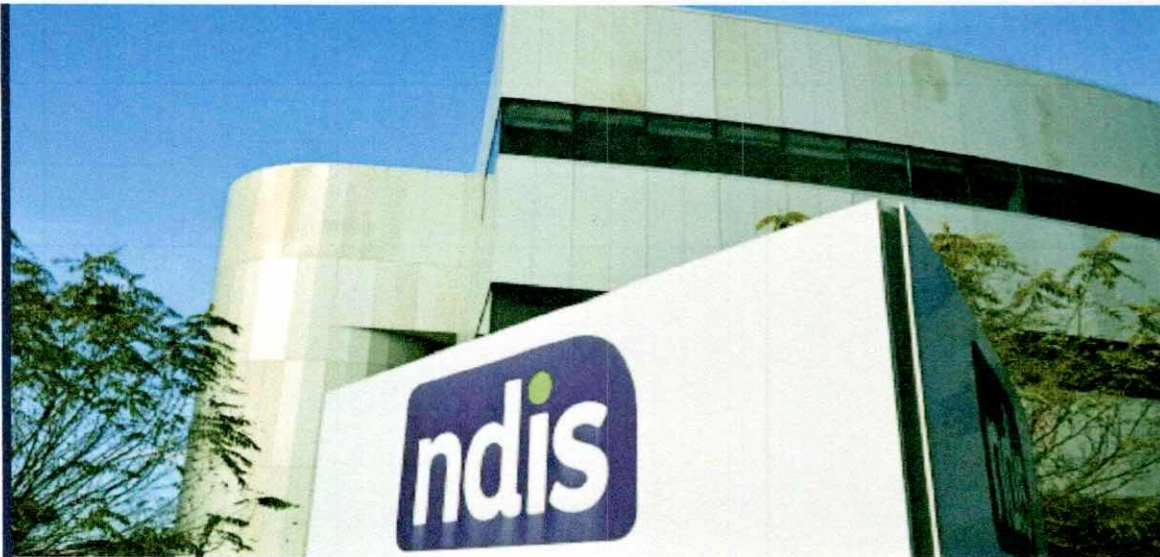
Small NDIS provider Sustained Quality Care (SQC) recently agreed to take over the management of a Camberwell home from Scope and was shocked when the huge not-for-profit organisation asked it to pay for the bus that accompanied the property and its residents.

The wheelchair-accessible bus, worth an estimated \$25,000, had been given to Scope for free by the government to continue care for the home's residents, under the terms of a wider agreement for five private operators to progressively take over management of Victoria's 549 former state-run disability homes from 2017.

But as she prepares to take over management of the Camberwell home this month, SQC chief executive Abioloa Ajetomobi said she was stunned when Scope told her she'd not only need to buy the home's bus from Scope, but asked her to sign a non-disclosure agreement preventing her discussing the deal. Ajetomobi refused to sign the agreement or pay for the bus.

"Given that this bus was allocated for that property, and they are no longer managing this property, it is ethical for them to pass on the bus," Ajetomobi said. "We are open to meeting any costs related to the transfer, like registration or roadworthy. But, for me to purchase the bus which they did not pay for themselves and which was given to them in the interests of the participants, is not ethical."

RELATED ARTICLE



Exclusive Disability

Disability service provider 'right-sizing' as financial cliff looms

In response to questions from this masthead, Scope provided a statement confirming it had undertaken an organisation-wide review of transport arrangements after its funding deed with the Victorian government expired.

However, Scope did not answer questions about the potential sale of its specialised disability vehicles, including those it was given by the state government.

“Following this review, Scope is transitioning to a participant-funded transport model. This brings transport arrangements into alignment with what already occurs across the sector,” Scope said.

“Scope will continue to provide transport only where it is necessary for safety, essential access or daily living and where there are no local options.

“In those circumstances, a service agreement will be required with the client and costs will be met by the client from the funding they receive from the NDIS.”

Scope said it would continue funding existing transport arrangements until June 30, 2026, so clients and families had six months to plan, explore local transport options, and review NDIS funding where required.

The decision impacts all Scope supported independent living clients, not just those in government-owned homes.

“These changes ensure Scope can continue delivering high-quality, person-centred services in a way that is fair, sustainable and aligned with the NDIS, now and into the future,” the statement said.

The Victorian government declined to comment about changes to Scope’s transport arrangements, or the proposed sale of the vehicles it handed the organisation to run its homes.

When approached for comment about Scope’s plan to shift all resident transport costs to the NDIS, the NDIA declined to comment, saying it was a matter for the organisation.

Start the day with a summary of the day’s most important and interesting stories, analysis and insights. [Sign up for our Morning Edition newsletter.](#)

MORE: [Disability](#) [For subscribers](#) [Victorian Economy](#)



[Grant McArthur](#) is a senior reporter for The Age