



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement strategy

What we've done so far

July 2021

Easy Read version

ndis

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How to use this document



The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) wrote this document. When you see the word 'we', it means the NDIA.



This document is written in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 29.



This Easy Read document is a summary of another document.



You can find the other document on our website at www.ndis.gov.au



You can ask for help to read this document. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What's in this document?

Acknowledgement	4
What is this document about?	6
What we know about First Nations participants	8
What do we want to do?	12
What have we done so far?	15
Our goals	22
More information	27
Word list	29

Acknowledgement



This document includes photos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It may contain images of people who have passed away.



We recognise First Nations peoples as the traditional owners of our land.

They were the first people to live on and use the:



- land



- rivers



- seas.



We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



They hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia.

What is this document about?



The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supports people with disability across Australia.



We want to make sure people with disability from every community can get the same supports and services.



This includes people with disability from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



This is why we made the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy*.

We call it the Strategy.



We made the Strategy in 2017.

It explained how we would:



- work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities



- make sure the NDIS meets the needs of all Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In this document we explain what we:



- have done over the past 4 years



- want to do over the next 18 months.

What we know about First Nations participants



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also known as **First Nations peoples**.



Participants are people with disability who take part in the NDIS.



In this document we call them First Nations participants.



We have done some research about how many First Nations participants take part in the NDIS.



At the end of March 2021 there were 30,763 First Nations participants taking part in the NDIS.



The number of First Nations participants has almost tripled over the past 3 years.



First Nations participants now make up 6.8 per cent of all people who use the NDIS.



We also looked at how First Nations participants take part in the community when they use the NDIS for 3 years.



We found that more First Nations participants take part in community activities after taking part in the NDIS for 3 years.



We also found that more First Nations participants aged under 25 years have jobs after taking part in the NDIS for 3 years.



We also asked First Nations participants if they had a good experience taking part in the NDIS.



In December 2020, 84 per cent of First Nations participants said they had a good experience making their NDIS plan.



This is similar to what other participants have told us.



We're really pleased with this progress.



But we know there's still work to do.

That's why we're:



- looking at the Strategy



- telling you what we have done



- telling you what we will do next.



We are also planning to refresh the Strategy in 2022.



We will start talking to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people later this year about what should be in the new Strategy.

What do we want to do?



Our Strategy says we want to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Australia.

This includes:



- talking to different communities



- sharing information with different communities.

We want to know and understand the different cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:



- participants



- communities.



When we know and understand the needs of different cultures, we can make sure the NDIS works well for them.



We want to understand the best way to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



And we want to share that knowledge with other organisations and governments.



We want to work with local communities to support First Nations participants to take part in the NDIS.



We want to find out how the NDIS can work better for First Nations participants.



We want to support providers from First Nations communities to give participants the right services in the right places.



We want to look at things we are already doing that can help us make the NDIS work better for First Nations participants.



We want to keep track of how well the NDIS works for First Nations participants.



We explain what we have done in each of these areas so far on the following pages.

What have we done so far?

We worked with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to build strong relationships that:



- respect everyone



- include everyone.



We shared information about how to take part in the NDIS with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, using videos and booklets.



We made an **Employment Strategy**.

Employment means you:



- have a job
- do work
- get paid.



The Employment Strategy is about making the NDIA a good place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work.



We made a second *Reconciliation Action Plan*.
In this document we call it the Plan.



The Plan explains that we want to keep developing a strong relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



We created 3 different groups of people who tell us how we can make the NDIS work better.

This includes the:



- Independent Advisory Council



- Participant Reference Group



- Participant First Engagement Initiative.

Each of these groups includes people:



- from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities



- who speak up for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



We held 9 workshops with First Nations participants who live in **remote and very remote areas**.



Remote and very remote areas are places that are far away from cities or towns.



We wanted to learn how we could make it easier for these participants to take part in the NDIS.



We have worked with local organisations on projects that help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities learn about and take part in the NDIS.



We have also supported First Nations participants to find service providers near them.



We helped service providers:

- connect with First Nations participants
- support First Nations participants.



We took a closer look at the things we learned from First Nations participants.



We wrote a report about it in June 2019.



These reports help us to keep track of how the NDIS supports First Nations participants.



In 2019, we started a training program about how to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



By the end of April 2021, 85 per cent of our staff had done the training.



We have encouraged more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work for us.



By the end of April 2021, 125 people found jobs at the NDIA through programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment.

We have made guides for our:



- **NDIA Planners** – people who make new plans



- **Local Area Coordinators (LACs)** – people who help people with disability find and use supports and services.

These guides can support our staff to:



- work well with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities



- support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.

Our goals



We have 11 new goals we want to achieve.

We want to do this:



- in the next 18 months



- while we develop a new Strategy.



These goals will help us make sure we think about First Nations participants when we do our work.



1. We want to make a plan to improve how we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in remote and very remote areas.



2. We want to set up 2 digital hubs in Northern Territory communities that are in remote and very remote areas.



The digital hubs will share information about the NDIS in Aboriginal languages.



3. We want to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make sure our documents work well for them.



This includes testing a new set of documents about the NDIS.



We also want to check that our rules think about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



4. We want to give our staff more information about the best way to work with First Nations participants.



5. We want to make another Employment Strategy about what we want to do in the next 4 years.



6. We want to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the Northern Territory to make the NDIS work better there.



7. We want to listen to what people with disability have to say about the NDIS, particularly people who live in communities that are hard to reach.



8. We want to work out the best way to support children with disability who live in remote and very remote areas.

To do this, we want to talk to:



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities



- people who work in early childhood learning.



9. We want to talk to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about the **Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI)** program.



ECEI is support for children with disability while they are still very young.



10. We want to keep supporting First Nations participants to find service providers that are right for them.

To do this we need to:



- do more research



- work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



11. We want to keep working with people with disability from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make the NDIS better.

More information

For more information about this document,
please contact us.



www.ndis.gov.au



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131 450

If you have a speech or hearing impairment, you can call:



TTY

1800 555 677



Speak and Listen

1800 555 727



National Relay Service

133 677

www.relayservice.gov.au

Word list



Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI)

ECEI is support for children with disability while they are still very young.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also known as First Nations peoples.



Local Area Coordinators (LACs)

LACs are people who help people with disability find and use supports and services.



NDIA Planner

NDIA Planners are people who makes new plans.



Participants

Participants are people with disability who take part in the NDIS.



Remote and very remote areas

Remote and very remote areas are places far away from cities or towns.



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