

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Reference Group

Terms of Reference

April 2021

Version Control

Version	Revision	Details of Amendment	Date
1.0	None		18 January 2019
1.1	Correction	Update of payment of expenses for travel for Members	19 March 2019
1.2	Update Members	Removed Antonia Albanese as Chair, added Liz Neville	19 September 2019
1.4	Update Members	Removed Andrew Whitecross as DSS representative, replaced with Matthew Flavel	23 January 2020
2.0	Update to Terms of Reference	Update following the expiration of the first terms of reference	6 October 2020
2.1	Update to Terms of Reference	Inclusion of Valerie Spencer as DSS representative, minor amendments for clarity	14 April 2021

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1. Purpose

The Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Reference Group will support the development of the SDA market and provision of SDA supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The SDA Reference Group will accomplish this purpose by discussing, and providing feedback and advice on particular matters brought to the Group by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), including:

- choice and control for participants in SDA
- participant experience of SDA decision-making processes, and market and housing outcomes
- growth in the SDA market under the NDIS
- implementation of SDA policy, including whether intended policy outcomes are being achieved
- market development matters including:
 - provider capacity development
 - availability of market data, including NDIA release of supply and demand data
 - any other issues observed
- thin market or supply issues
- identification and promotion of innovation and best practice in SDA
- continuing implementation and evaluations of SDA reforms resulting from the 2018 review of the SDA Pricing and Payments Framework
- implementation of the SDA Design Standard, including third-party certification processes
- Existing and Legacy SDA stock issues and opportunities.

2. Outcomes

The SDA Reference Group intends to enable the NDIA to deliver the following outcomes:

- SDA policy objectives and intent which are appropriate, allow choice and control for participants and facilitate market development
- SDA policy, practice and processes which are improved with input from participant and sector expertise
- awareness of current and emerging issues affecting New Build, as well as Existing and Legacy SDA
- the NDIA is well informed about issues and opportunities for the SDA sector
- market development, which is improved through the availability and consideration of sector feedback.

The SDA Reference Group, in accordance with the NDIA Corporate Plan 2020–2024, Aspirations 2,3 and 4, will support a quality experience and outcomes for participants and a competitive market with innovative support through a genuinely connected and engaged stakeholder sector. The outcomes will assist in the achievement of the following goals:

- a growing SDA market with available supports and services

- participant satisfaction
- positive provider and investor sentiment and confidence.

3. Outputs

The SDA Reference Group will deliver the following outputs:

- Four quarterly meetings throughout the year that serve as a platform to:
 - provide timely, accurate, insightful and accessible advice to enable informed decision making regarding SDA policy and practice
 - raise sector level issues and opportunities, and identification of market concerns and potential responses for discussion at Group meetings
 - support continuous improvement in SDA arrangements and operations under the NDIS.
- Meeting minutes and other records, approved by the Chair of the SDA Reference Group through the following meeting process, which document:
 - actions and recommendations arising from the meetings
 - information about how the meetings are assisting in achieving the SDA Reference Group outcomes.
- A communique of each meeting, published on the NDIS website.
- Any such other written reports or other material as specified by the Chair, in consultation with the Group.

4. Membership

Membership includes key senior Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS), NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and NDIA staff, and appointed representatives across the sector, including:

- NDIS participants, families and/or their representatives
- providers of SDA (including Community Housing Providers)
- investors and financiers
- developers
- other key stakeholders (e.g. research and policy organisations).

Membership to the Group is intended to reflect the diversity of SDA stakeholder types who are appointed via an open expression of interest process led by the NDIA. Group size will be limited to ensure that meetings are manageable and all members have the opportunity to make contributions.

The NDIA will ensure that NDIS participants and participant voices are prioritised for membership.

DSS will be included within the Group in an advisory position. The NDIA will liaise with state governments and may invite attendance where state input would benefit Group discussions.

The NDIA will have sole discretion regarding the appointment of Members.

4.1. Expression of interest process

Expressions of interest are called for publicly, allowing a minimum of 10 working days for responses.

The NDIA will review applications and appoint a group of stakeholders who have expressed their interest. Members will be appointed to ensure at least one representative from each of the key stakeholder groups outlined above.

Members will be selected based on their ability to provide input to current and emerging SDA issues, including demonstrating clear knowledge of the range of issues and opportunities that impact on their stakeholder group.

The number of members will be limited to ensure each member has the opportunity to make contributions during meetings.

4.2. Commonwealth membership

- a) Gerrie Mitra, General Manager, Provider and Markets Division, NDIA (Chair)
- b) Valerie Spencer, Branch Manager, Market Quality Group, DSS (Member)
- c) Samantha Taylor, Registrar, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (Advisor)

4.3. Appointed membership

To be determined via an expression of interest process.

4.4. Additional expertise

As required, the Chair may request additional representation to address issues that require subject matter expertise or to provide external market information.

The Chair may approve one proxy per Member if a Member is unavailable to attend a meeting.

4.5. Quorum

Meetings require a minimum of five appointed external representatives to proceed.

4.6. Working groups

The Chair may establish working groups from a selection of Members to provide input or report on specific issues.

The makeup of any such working groups will be discussed with the SDA Reference Group and the outputs of the working group, such as a report or presentation, will be specified at commencement.

Working groups will deliver outputs to the broader SDA Reference Group.

5. Conduct at meetings

Members are expected to:

- a) Read all papers before attending the meeting
- b) Remain within the allotted time for agenda items
- c) Act in a collegiate and collaborative manner when discussing and resolving issues
- d) Declare and avoid conflicts of interest and conflicts of role.

5.1. Frequency and timing of meetings

Meetings will be scheduled at minimum four times per year, quarterly, either remotely or in suitable locations that can accommodate the Group including any accessibility requirements.

A schedule of items for discussion will be developed by the NDIA with input from the Chair and Members ahead of all meetings.

Additional meetings may be called by the Chair if needed.

The Secretariat will advise Members in advance of meeting dates, venue (if applicable) and times. Discussion with Members outside of meetings will be coordinated by the Secretariat.

5.2. Remote meetings

Due to the circumstances of the current pandemic, meetings will be held remotely unless Members are advised by the Chair.

The Secretariat will be responsible for arranging teleconference facilities and communicating these details to Members.

5.3. Duration of the Reference Group

The SDA Reference Group will be operational for 12 months from the date of the first meeting for a minimum of four quarterly meetings.

The NDIA may decide to continue the SDA Reference Group, as well as revise the membership at its discretion. Membership will be determined by an open expression of interest process that existing Members will be eligible to participate in.

5.4. Records management

The Secretariat will provide ongoing coordination, record-keeping and liaison with Members for all matters to do with the operations of the Group.

Draft minutes and action items arising from meetings will be circulated for comment as soon as possible via email following each meeting. Members will be given the opportunity to request changes.

Once endorsed, the meeting minutes will be published on the NDIS website.

5.5. Communication procedures

The Chair is responsible for recording and communicating issues, advice and actions to Members and other key stakeholders in the NDIA.

Members will ensure that the Secretariat has current contact details and is advised of any specific communication requirements.

6. Payment of expenses

6.1. Catering

The NDIA will arrange and cover the cost of reasonable catering and venue hire for any meetings held in person.

6.2. Travel expenses

The NDIA reimbursement policy is generally only applied for participants or individuals with a disability, their families or carer. This does not include a formal paid representative role with a peak, sector or advocacy organisation.

Reasonable travel expenses incurred to attend meetings by participants, individuals with a disability, their families or carer will be considered in accordance with NDIA's External Consultation Policy.

Members must receive approval from the NDIA in writing before any travel or accommodation is booked.

Teleconference facilities will be in place for any in-person meetings for members who are unable to travel.

6.3. Other expenses

Where the Member is an NDIS participant or a representative, the NDIA will consider reimbursement for the individual's time and reasonable out-of-pocket expenses where consistent with the NDIA's External Consultation Policy.

Other Members will not be paid or reimbursed by the NDIA for the cost of their time spent attending meetings or attending to other issues. Members will not be paid consultancy or sitting fees by the NDIA.

7. Conflicts of interest and roles procedures

Perceived and actual conflicts of interest and/or conflicts of roles are to be declared by all members before accepting membership. Members will have an ongoing obligation to declare any additional conflicts of interests, should they arise.

'Conflicts of interest' arise when an individual's personal, financial or other interest compromises, influences or affects their role as a Member of the Group. A conflict of interest can be real or apparent. It can also be both financial and non-financial in nature.

Conflicts of roles arise when Members represent two different roles, the performance of which may raise perceived or actual conflicts.

The Chair is responsible for determining the appropriate course of action for dealing with specific conflicts of interest. Depending on the conflict involved, the Chair may excuse the Member from the meeting for the relevant agenda item, or may take other appropriate action.

8. Review of Terms of Reference

The Chair will review the Group's terms of reference 12 months after the Group's first meeting (March 2022) or at any time to ensure that the Group remains effective.