30 April 2024

Participants of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) have co-designed a new Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD) Strategy 2024-2028 (Strategy).

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) worked closely with the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) and an Expert Advisory Group of 32 organisations, to develop the Strategy.

Over 800 voices from the CALD community shaped the Strategy, providing the Agency with an abundance of feedback, lived experience, ideas, and stories.

This collaboration means the Strategy and the NDIS will be able to respond to the needs of the almost 60,000 participants from CALD backgrounds, including participants from the Deaf Community, now and into the future.

The Strategy proposes to implement 28 actions over four years and presents an approach to make the Scheme more inclusive and accessible, enhance Agency processes and systems, and provide a better NDIS experience for people in CALD communities.

Specific actions include:

- Providing better guidance to planners to improve their understanding of the supports and needs of CALD participants, and to make sure planning processes are culturally appropriate.
- Review and update processes for NDIS meetings with interpreters (including Auslan) to improve communication approaches such as options for longer meetings, preferred or required interpreters and in-person interpreting services.
- Working with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to enable more culturally appropriate services.
- Identifying, developing and supporting activities from community organisations that promote awareness of the NDIS (including eligibility) and reduce stigma around disability in CALD communities.
- Researching, identifying and publishing new data on participants from CALD backgrounds to enable better evidence-based decision making by NDIS staff, partners and the sector.

The Strategy incorporates findings from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and feedback from the NDIS Review.

The Agency has also developed an Action Plan to measure the Strategy’s progress and to continue to listen to feedback and learn from CALD communities along the way.

There are 85 translations of the Strategy and its Action Plan, including Auslan and Easy Read versions.

Annual public reporting will show the progress of each action and a summary of milestones and engagements.

Quotes from the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, Minister for the NDIS

- The Government is making important steps towards making the NDIS more inclusive.
- The Strategy is the NDIA's commitment to make the NDIS stronger, and to improve participants' experience with the Scheme.
- I am proud that at the heart of this strategy is a commitment to co-designing solutions. The way the Agency has partnered with the disability sector has given us a blueprint on the best ways to work together.
- We'll apply what we've learned to future Scheme reforms in line with the NDIS Review's recommendations.
- Working together with NEDA and the disability sector means the NDIS will work better for people in CALD communities.
- This means people with disability from CALD backgrounds have been, and will continue to be, directly involved in decisions to make the Scheme better.
- Working in partnership with the disability community means the Scheme is headed for success.

Quotes from Maryanne Cosic, NEDA Board President

- The National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) are committed to working with the NDIA, people with disability from CALD backgrounds and others in the disability sector to drive meaningful and positive change.
- The CALD Strategy is an initiative in which the NDIA has closely worked with people with disability from multicultural communities and diverse language groups to make the Scheme more accessible and inclusive.
- NEDA are excited to continue our work with the NDIA in delivering the CALD Strategy over the next 4 years to ensure that it benefits people with disability, their families and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Our communities must remain central to this Strategy, with their voices continuously heard and respected.

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