6 June 2024

Disability Representative and Carers Organisation (DRCO) Attendees: A4 Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia, Australian Autism Alliance, Blind Citizens Australia, Carers Australia, Children and Young People with Disability Australia, Community Mental Health Australia, Deaf Australia, Deafblind Australia, Deafness Forum Australia, Disability Advocacy Network Australia, Down Syndrome Australia, Every Australian Counts, Inclusion Australia, Mental Health Australia, National Ethnic Disability Alliance, National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, People with Disability Australia, Physical Disability Australia, ReImagine Australia, Self Advocacy Resource Unit, Women with Disabilities Australia, Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance.

Independent Advisory Council (IAC) Attendees: Leah van Poppel, Dr Sharon Boyce, Gavin Burner, Dr Leighton Jay, Samantha Jenkinson, Sylvana Mahmic, James Manders, Sam Paior, Dr George Taleporos, Mark Tonga.

Apologies: Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, JFA Purple Orange.

Key outcomes

1. The NDIA, DRCO and IAC commit to continue working together on NDIS reforms.
2. Co-design working groups need to evolve to better reflect the broader scope of co-design work in this phase of reform.

Actions from this meeting

Action	Details	Responsibility	Status
1	Investigate establishing cross-group meetings for groups working on similar initiatives, or where cross-over is identified between group initiatives.	Co-design Branch	Ongoing
2	Ensure reform program members are provided visibility of materials and products from different working groups, before external publication.	Co-design Branch	Ongoing

3	Coordinate opportunities for co-design co-chairs to meet regularly.	Co-design Branch	Ongoing
4	Prepare summaries of group sessions regarding the NDIS Review to inform Government considerations of formal response.	Co-design Branch / NDIA Secretariat	Ongoing
5	Provide information on how plan flexibility co-design topics will be incorporated into new co-design program.	Co-design Branch	Ongoing

Key themes and insights

Agenda item 1: RFO Co-design progress update

Discussion:

- Co-design working groups need to be fit for purpose with clear scope and priorities.
- Important to have Agency representatives from relevant business areas participate in working groups from the outset.
- An ongoing mechanism is required to connect reform working groups where topics cross over the scope of multiple groups.
- The disability community is concerned about the Agency using the term ‘fraud’ as part of its communications related to some Scheme reform. The concern is about the long-term implications for the Scheme’s reputation with the public by having it associated with the term ‘fraud’ and the implication that participants are defrauding the Scheme.

Outcomes:

- NDIA to provide more regular updates to all members on outcomes of co-design.
- Current working groups will be adapted to match the agreed topics and oversee the co-design, consultation and engagement activities in that topic.

Agenda item 2: NDIS Review themes and priorities

Discussion:

- Reforms need to be guided by people with lived experience and be sequenced and implemented in a coordinated way.
- Foundational supports need to be fully functional, with a strong focus on local services, before being promoted as a pathway for people with disabilities to access.
- There needs to be clearly defined roles and responsibilities across government, with transparency of reform decision making.
- There needs to be clarity about what service navigators provide, and reassurance that navigators have the skills and capabilities to add value to participants experience.

Outcomes:

- A summary of DRCO and IAC priorities identified during the discussion will be developed and circulated to all members.

Agenda item 3: Future co-design approach

Discussion:

- New groups need to be created based on co-design topics that better reflect the broader scope of work in this phase of reform.
- Existing Agency reference and advisory groups will provide input across reform topics in their area of expertise.
- New groups must begin with robust scope setting, so that responsibility for addressing reform topics is clearly defined.
- Arrangements need to give people opportunity to contribute to reform topics concerning their organisation members and networks.
- There needs to be clarity about how existing Agency advisory groups provide advice to support working groups develop reforms.

Outcomes:

- The Agency proposed to hold intensive workshops with all reform program members on reform topics that cut across the scope of multiple co-design working groups or are of interest and need the input of all members. For example, navigation.
- The Agency will continue to develop work with DRCOs and IAC members, and people from across the disability community, as part of the ongoing Scheme reform program. This work does not pre-empt any outcome from the passage of the NDIS Amendment Bill .

Agenda item 4: Shared NDIA, DRCO and IAC statement

Discussion:

- The disability community has asked for a public commitment to co-design Scheme reforms.

Outcomes:

- A shared NDIA, DRCO and IAC statement has been developed for publication to outline the group’s commitment to working together on NDIS reforms. The final version will be made public.

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