28 August 2024

The purpose of the First Nations Advisory Council (FNAC) is to provide advice to the NDIA to guide initiatives that will improve outcomes for First Nations people with disability.

The following members and NDIA representatives were in attendance:

Chairperson

- Dr Janine Mohamed, Deputy CEO, First Nations Group, NDIA

Members

- Damian Griffis, CEO, First Peoples Disability Network
- Tess Moodie, Independent Consultant, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Gi Brown, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Joanna Agius, Deadly Deaf Mob, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Suzy Trindall, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Justen Thomas, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Dr Scott Avery, Senior Lecturer, Western Sydney University
- Kim McRea, NPY Women’s Council
- Thea Dunkley, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations

NDIA representatives

- Rebecca Falkingham, CEO, NDIA
- Tanya Malthouse, Branch Manager First Nations Policy, Research and Reform Branch, NDIA
- Susan Moore, Branch Manager First Nations Strategy Branch, NDIA
- Anna Leditschke, Executive Officer First Nations Group, NDIA

Apologies

- Victor Djungadi Patrick, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Munatji McKenzie, Disability Royal Commission Project Officer, NPY Women’s Council.
- Donna Murray, CEO, Indigenous Allied Health of Australia
- Jennifer Cullen, Equity and Inclusion Reference Group Co-chair, Independent Advisory Council (IAC)
- Gretchen Young, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)

Meeting summary

The meeting was held virtually. The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the various lands from which members were dialling in, paying respect to their Elders, past and present. FNAC members introduced themselves, briefly noting their background, First Nations connection and sector experience.

Meeting purpose

The meeting was an opportunity for FNAC members to reconnect after an extended break, and to agree on the draft Terms of Reference. The meeting also offered an opportunity to meet the new NDIA First Nations leadership team and agree on next steps to develop the First Nations Strategy and subsequent Implementation Plan.

Draft Terms of Reference

The First Nations Group team summarised the status of the draft Terms of Reference and the changes requested at the last FNAC meeting on 22 September 2023. Changes included updating the purpose of the FNAC and removing government positions from the membership.

Feedback

The FNAC discussed the most appropriate fit for the FNAC Chairing arrangements. The FNAC moved to explore an external expression of interest process for a First Nations person with disability to fill the role of Independent Chair.

The FNAC deliberated on the definition of people with disability as opposed to people with lived experience of disability. The FNAC discussed the best possible composition for its membership.

Members requested several items be added to the draft Terms of Reference, including a Glossary, anti-audism, plain English publications, and provisions for sub-committees and proxies.

CEO Update

NDIA CEO Rebecca Falkingham welcomed the creation of the First Nations Group within the Agency. DCEO First Nations Group, Dr Janine Mohamed, would assume the role as Co-Chair of the FNAC.

The FNAC's important role in co-designing the First Nations Strategy and advising on First Nations issues was reaffirmed. The FNAC membership had been reduced to remove government representatives and amplify the voices of First Nations people.

FNAC members advocated the appointment of First Nations people with disability into leadership roles within the FNAC and the Agency more broadly.

First Nations Group Update

The First Nations Group summarised its activities since being established in April 2024.

The Group is in a discovery phase. The Group has undertaken extensive engagement across the Agency and with First Nations communities. The Group is now developing its key functions, priorities and operational plans.

The First Nations Strategy is a key priority.

The First Nations Strategy Workplan

The FNAC discussed a workplan to deliver the First Nations Strategy. Topics discussed were the timeline, actions, proposed strategy models, accessibility, cultural considerations, and preferred language.

The FNAC agreed to establish a sub-committee to advance the Strategy.

Closing and next steps

The FNAC agreed that its next meeting would focus on what is Indigenous co-design.
For any feedback or questions about the First Nations Advisory Council, please email enquiries.firstnationsbranch@ndis.gov.au.

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