24 January 2025

This is a summary of the Participant Reference Group's (PRG) meeting.

The Participant Reference Group (PRG) makes sure the NDIA hears and understands the participant voice. The PRG has 23 members from participant and carer organisations across Australia.

The NDIA uses feedback from PRG meetings to keep making the NDIS better.

PRG members work on what the NDIA plans to do. They work on new and current policies, improving the systems we use, and how we deliver services.

Chairperson's welcome

Donna Purcell is the Branch Manager, Office of the Participant Advocate and chair of the PRG. She welcomed members to the final PRG meeting of the year, a virtual meeting to talk openly.

Farewell, achievements and thanks

PRG members thanked NDIA staff for a busy year, for sharing information and supporting each other. Corri McKenzie, Donna and the Participant First team thanked PRG members for their commitment to attending meetings and providing honest feedback.

PRG members for 2024: Annette, Ben, Cat, Charlotte, Chris, Debbie, Ellen, George, Henry, Lizzy, Maggie, Naomi, Neale, Pauline, Santi, Sarah E., Sarah H., Sarah S., Tahlia, Tammy, Tiana, Uli, Zac.

The PRG is being refreshed for 2025. For those members who are leaving, we are grateful for your commitment to the PRG. For those members who are continuing we look forward to working with you in 2025.

Eligibility reassessments

PRG members asked about the letter that is sent to participants asking for more information.

The NDIA said the letter has changed because of the legislation. We said it is not clear enough about why a reassessment is needed. We said we are doing a quick consultation on the current letter because it is making people anxious.

We said it is a quick consultation because we need to get a revised letter into our system. We said we want to start using it as quickly as possible.

We said we can send out the letter to PRG members. We said PRG members can give us feedback on the letter by 20 December 2024.

PRG members asked about eligibility reassessments during the Christmas period. The NDIA said we have stopped doing eligibility reassessments from today (11 December) for the Christmas and New Year period.

The NDIA said we will design how both the current and the new process will work. We said this is part of planned co-design work in the new year.

Open forum

This session is for PRG members to talk about issues that have come up in their communities.

PRG members discussed issues in breakout groups. Each group had 3 to 4 top issues and these were:

- Core funding is often reduced due to assistive technology, for example Guide Dogs, being funded
- The claims process for the app is difficult and often inaccessible
- The Section 10 changes – things that were able to be claimed can’t be claimed anymore, which leads to a worse quality of life
- Plan change delays of six months to a year or longer
- What the NDIA promised and what they deliver are not necessarily the same thing
- Administrative Review Tribunal (formerly the Administrative Appeals Tribunal) staff should come to a PRG meeting to understand the participant experience
- Transport payments are unclear and unfair
- Communication isn’t always timely or clear and sometimes there is no communication
- More co-design is needed and PRG members should be involved
- The new evidence advisory committee should have peer review from people with disability.

The NDIA took notes at all breakout groups.

Final comments and close

The NDIA said we will set up a register for questions raised in PRG meetings and taken on notice.

Donna thanked PRG members for their time and contribution. The staff from the Office of the Participant Advocate wished all PRG members a safe and restful holiday season.

Next meeting

Wednesday 26 and Thursday 27 February 2025

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