28 May 2025

“What do you want to say that we haven’t asked you?” A suggestion from a working group member of a question the NDIA needs to ask members. A powerful way to uncover insights that might otherwise be missed.

What we talked about

- **The Participant Pathway Experience and how we can strengthen our Co-design approach**
  The NDIA shared updates on the revised workplan. The commitment is to be more transparent about what is in and out of scope, and to make sure diverse voices are included in the reform process. Meetings will begin with clear objectives and expected outcomes, and summaries will be shared in plain English instead of long minutes.

  The group discussed how the work of the Participant Pathway Experience Co-design Working Group fits in with legislative changes led by the Department of Social Services (DSS). While DSS leads on legislation, this group focuses on service design and improving the participant experience. There is opportunity to influence how things are delivered by the NDIA even if some rules are final

- **Insights for New Framework Planning**
  NDIA presented insights gathered from participants over the past six months and highlighted five key moments in the planning journey from the initial preparation meeting to implementation

What we heard

- Participants want clarity, continuity, and to feel respected and heard. They also want flexibility in how they engage with the NDIA and control over their personal information. Avoiding the need for participants to repeat their story multiple times.
- Consider renaming of the “Notice of Impairment” to make it clearer and more respectful. This change will help participants understand what information the NDIA holds and how it is used. The importance of including accessibility and safety needs in planning conversations was also emphasised.
- The return of the participant workbook is welcomed, as it helps people prepare and leads to better outcomes. It was also suggested that preparation meetings could be a time to support participants in completing a workbook.
- The NDIA added that while it is important to gather relevant information, the Agency needs to be clear about what the NDIS can and cannot fund.

- Respectful and transparent practices must apply across all meetings. Participants feel ambushed in so-called “check-ins” where major decisions are made without their input. Respectful, transparent engagement must extend to reviews and reassessments, not just initial planning. Planners often arrive unprepared, unaware of participants’ disabilities or history, which erodes trust.
- Participants want to feel safe, known, and in control. The phrase “safe and known” needs to be clearly defined and backed by action—not just words. Participants want to be seen as whole people, not just their disability. They value agency. That is, control over what information they share and how it’s shared.

What we agreed on

- There was a broader conversation about how meetings are run. Not everyone can attend frequently, so feedback methods need to be flexible—surveys, collaborative tools, and email submissions were all suggested. Some participants prefer longer monthly meetings, while some organisation representatives prefer shorter, focused ones. Some participants shared that they prefer to give feedback in the moment due to memory and communication challenges.
- NDIA suggested starting meetings with an Easy English agenda, setting aside time for personal experiences, and being upfront about what will and will not be covered. The Agency committed to providing transcripts, locking in meeting dates, and being transparent about what each session will involve.
- To make it easier to share what’s happening, we’ll move away from long meeting minutes. Instead, you’ll get a simple two-page summary covering: what we heard, what we discussed and what’s happening next. The goal is to be more open and make it easy for you to share updates in plain English with your networks—so everyone stays in the loop on what’s happening in the co-design space.

What we will do next

The group wrapped up with a shared understanding that while everyone has different needs and preferences, the goal is to make the process more inclusive, respectful, and participant-focused.

Provide an overview of the New Framework Planning for working group members on 20 May 2025. The next working group meeting is on 10 June 2025.

Who we met with

Participants, Disability Representative and Carer Organisations, Independent Advisory Council and Reference Group members, subject matter experts and NDIA staff.

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