29 August 2025

Quote from attendee: 'We need to build knowledge and empowerment from the beginning of the process, not just on the way through.'

What we talked about

Topic 1: Preparing for a Support Needs Assessment

The NDIA shared feedback we have heard to date about booking the preparation stage before a support needs assessment, highlighting the need for:

- Clear communication of expectations
- The option to bring a support person
- Sufficient preparation time
- Opportunity to discuss Impairment information.

Topic 2: Group Discussion

The NDIA outlined what the participant experience could look like for preparing for a Support Needs Assessment and invited the group’s feedback.

What we heard

- Participants need time, knowledge, and accessible resources (like easy read materials and short videos) to prepare effectively and achieve better outcomes.
- Building trust is essential - many participants have had negative past experiences and need a safe, supportive environment to feel comfortable engaging.
- The process must be flexible and inclusive, accommodating different communication needs, capacities, and life circumstances.
- A simplified, community-friendly process delivered by a skilled, relational workforce improves participant experience and outcomes.
- Participants want clear explanations of the many steps and what to expect at each stage to reduce confusion and anxiety.
- Peer support and advocacy are highly valued for building confidence, reducing stress, and helping participants navigate the process.
- Participants should not have to retell their story multiple times – making easier information sharing is important.
- Including goal conversations in the preparation process helps assessors focus on what participants can do. It also helps to assist with having a person-centred conversation that

focuses on participants' hopes and skills, not just their challenges. This supports a more positive and empowering assessment experience.
- The Impairment information should be sent to the participant before the preparation meeting. The notice to move to new framework planning should be sent after preparing for a Support Needs Assessment.
- If the Impairment information has errors or there are other concerns about the participant's situation, they should not move to the new planning framework until those issues are sorted out.

What we agreed on

The NDIA will continue working with advisory groups, including those focused on Supported Decision Making, and conduct deep dive sessions with participants and stakeholders to better understand needs, risks, and what the experience should look like at each stage of the new framework pathway .

The NDIA welcomes feedback from group members on who else should be consulted.

Next meeting

The next working group meeting is on 15 July 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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