29 August 2025

'Even systems-literate people find the NDIA difficult to navigate.'

What we talked about

Topic 1: Ways of Working

We talked about how many people from the NDIA should be in meetings. Some members said they like having people from the NDIA in meetings, so they hear from people with lived experience of disability. We also talked about how members who are not from the NDIA could meet on their own to talk about co-design topics, if needed.

We talked about ways to support everyone to have a say. We used breakout rooms today to help with this. We also reminded people to speak slowly and clearly.

Topic 2: Sector led co-design

We shared a summary of the sector-led workshops held in June and July. This included:

- the number of workshops held
- groups of people who came to the workshops
- topics they talked about
- feedback from the sector organisations.

Inclusion Australia will also run some workshops to add to the work we have done. They are the national peak body for people with intellectual disability.

We shared a summary of the insights from Workshops 1 and 2. The group reflected on what stood out to them and what was missing.

People in Workshops 3 and 4 will talk about the information and resources participants need to empower them to understand and protect their rights to be safe.

What we heard

- Right now, even the most basic communication with NDIA makes people feel unsafe. Safeguarding should be a foundational and overarching process for the Agency.
- People said the Agency doesn’t share enough information about how they make decisions. People are losing trust in the Agency because they don’t share this information.

- Members are worried about how many changes the Agency is doing. They are worried about the risk for participants in the gaps between changes being delivered.
- People with a disability need information about what safety and safeguarding is. They need to know what their rights are so they can speak up for themselves.
- A newsletter for participants from the NDIA Commission could support participants to know more about their rights.
- Members are worried some people have felt they couldn't take a support person to their planning meeting. One member said they are being asked more often to go to planning meetings with people who are scared about plan reductions.
- Some participants need funded support to go to meetings. All participants need better information before and outside of planning meetings.
- The Victorian Disability Services Commissioner had a campaign called "It's ok to complain." Members felt the importance of this messaging and culture has been lost.
- The NDIS Commission said more could be done to improve connections with the NDIA. Members suggested a decision tree could help participants and carers to know where to go for help or information.
- The Department of Social Services (DSS) hopes the new Quality and Safeguarding Framework will support some of the Participant Safeguarding Initiative outcomes.

What we agreed on

- DSS is finishing co-designing the consultation paper on the National Safeguarding Framework. They will share it with the group when it is ready.
- Members want more information on Foundational Supports.
- The group will talk more about how they might guide future opportunities for co-design and consultation at the next meeting.

Next meeting

The Working Group will meet again on Tuesday, 16 September 2025, from 2-4pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

Who we met with

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

Related articles

Participant Safeguarding Co-design Working Group Tuesday, 13 May 2025

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Participant Safeguarding Co-design Working Group meeting 16 September 2025

Date
16 September 2025

Participant Safeguarding Co-design Working Group, meeting #6, 24 June 2025

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