1 September 2025

Meeting Summary

This is a summary of the NDIS Co-design Advisory Group (CAG) meeting on 8 August 2025.

Chairperson

Clair Wheeler, Acting General Manager, Co-design and Engagement Division, NDIA

Welcome and actions

Clair welcomed members including:

- Mary Mallett as the new representative from Inclusion Australia
- Marg Renwick attending on behalf of the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- Representatives from the NDIA Participant Outcomes, Evidence and Evaluation team.

Actions from previous meetings:

- No further feedback received from members on the Independent Advisory Council (IAC) guiding principles and measures of success. Advice from previous meeting was provided to the NDIA Strategy Team to incorporate into formal NDIA response to IAC.
- The first Co-design Continuous Improvement Quarterly Report (January to March 2025) was shared with members for review and discussion today. A second report (April to June) is being finalised.
- The proposed in-person meeting in October is scheduled for discussion in this meeting.

Co-design Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The Participant Outcomes, Evidence and Evaluation team provided an overview of the recent work to evaluate the NDIA's approach to co-design. Members were invited to share ideas on the future approach to evaluation as well as feedback on the first Co-design Continuous Improvement Quarterly Report.

Expanding the focus

Members said the continuous improvement approach and evaluation questions should consider:

- Whether co-design influences actual NDIA decisions and reform
- Long-term outcomes for participants and communities
- The consistency and quality of co-design processes across the NDIA
- Equity of participation (e.g. for marginalised groups)
- Power-sharing and decision-making transparency
- Staff capability to support inclusive, rights-based co-design
- Capacity-building outcomes for participants and Disability Representative and Carer Organisations (DRCOs).
- Sector-wide capability building, particularly for those not currently involved in co-design
- Barriers to full participation and how these are being addressed.

Expanding who we hear from and how to capture a wider range of experiences:

- Consider including feedback from advisory groups and other forums to capture broader insights into collaborative practices across the Agency
- Establish an annual feedback process using conversational interviews to understand evolving experiences of co-design over time
- Offer feedback opportunities more broadly to hear from underrepresented voices
- Be mindful of the timing when requesting feedback and the impact on responses, some people may need time to process and reflect after a session.

Quarterly report

Members responded positively to the first Quarterly Report, noting their appreciation for the use of different data types and the inclusion of quotes. They also recommended:

Show how feedback leads to change by:

- Clearly linking feedback to actions taken
- Defining benchmarks or measures of success and reporting on progress
- Summarising improvements for the next quarter.

Make the report easier to understand and interpret through:

- A more consistent structure
- Comparisons with previous reporting periods to track trends and changes over time
- Reflecting changes in groups or memberships to understand influence on findings
- Better representation across all stakeholder groups.

Strengthen how feedback in analysed and presented through:

- Deeper analysis on equity, power dynamics and influence

- Differentiating feedback from the co-design working groups and other forums to understand where feedback is coming from and identify gaps in representation
- Unpacking the reasons behind people's experiences and perspectives
- Being mindful of how reporting is framed to avoid presenting feedback as negative.

Proposed in-person October meeting planning

The NDIA raised the idea of improving public facing information about co-design at a proposed in-person meeting in October 2025. This would address calls to more clearly communicate to the community what we mean by co-design, what work is happening, and how people can get involved. Public-facing information should be clear, useful, and engaging.

Members were invited to consider what type of information and formats would best support the community in understanding the co-design approach and how to get their networks involved.

Members shared the following insights:

Clarifying engagement approaches

- Ensure the type of engagement being used is clearly communicated, noting that the Engagement Framework currently describes engagement as encompassing co-design, consultation, and informing
- Clarify how co-design differs from consultation, particularly in a government context
- Define and separate 'process design' noting that while the co-design working groups are guiding how co-design will happen, their work is often not co-design itself.
- Reflect an aspirational approach in the Framework that aims to improve all levels of engagement, with a focus on power dynamics, accessibility, and inclusive practices.

How we communicate and share information

- Members noted that the challenge isn't necessarily a lack of information, but rather the volume and difficulty in finding it, especially during times of frequent change
- Identify what information needs to be shared with the broader community, and where more detailed information should be provided to key stakeholder
- Provide information in accessible and inclusive formats that enables and empowers people to get involved
- Better coordination of co-design, consultation, and informing, particularly strengthening the informing aspect, to improve communication and awareness of upcoming projects, changes and opportunities to engage.
- Build staff capability to communicate with greater empathy and support, noting the Agency's communication around change can sometimes feel disconnected.

It was proposed to invite a DRCO representative who has been actively engaged in the discussion around process design, to the October meeting, pending no objections.

Following the discussion, the NDIA will prepare a proposal for the October meeting to share with members for feedback. Members will seek input from their networks to support the discussion at the October meeting.

Next meeting

Thursday 2 October, 10:00am - 4:00pm AEST, proposed hybrid meeting (in person and online).

Contact us

For more information about the Co-design Advisory Group, including membership and Terms of References, please visit the Co-design Advisory Group webpage.

If you have any feedback or questions about the Co-design Advisory Group, please email codesign@ndis.gov.au.

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