18 November 2025

‘It’s never a wrong time to look into safety for people with disability’ - Member

‘You've got to be able to talk about the issues if you want to change them. So just being able to really speak with honesty and from the heart has been refreshing.’- Member

What we talked about

Topic 1: Overview of disability safeguards consultation

- Representatives from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) talked about consultation they are doing to develop a Disability Support Quality and Safeguarding Framework and Disability Support Ecosystem Safeguarding Strategy. The Framework and Strategy are for all people with disability in all settings. There will be four rounds of consultation. The first round of consultation closes on 22 December.
- Our safeguarding workshops and feedback from this group helped DHDA with their approach, for example they did a video with a staff member about the consultation.

Topic 2: Themes and insights from our sector-led workshops

- The NDIA team reviewed high-level themes from the workshops in 2025 with participants, carers, and providers. The themes were:
  - Building trust between the NDIA and the community
  - Simple, transparent systems and processes
  - Respectful consistent communication
  - The need for greater flexibility and responsiveness
  - Holistic, person-centred approaches
  - A more connected ecosystem
  - Ideas around staff capacity
  - Tailored and accessible tools and resources.

What we heard from the group

‘Huge respect for all of the organisations involved in the important work that they did with participants and their supporters’

- The insights were succinct and resonated with people’s own experiences.

- NDIA needs to make sure the themes are turned into practical steps that can be actioned by staff who engage directly with people with disability, families and carers.
- These are real and current issues. It is good to know they will be addressed in new approaches to planning, but many participants and carers are afraid right now.

Topic 3: Reflection session

The co-chairs led a reflection session with members about their experience in group. The guiding questions were:

- What have you appreciated about this group?
- What could we have done better?
- If you had a magic wand, what would you change about this group?
- What would be your NDIS safeguarding priority for 2026?

People appreciated:

- The respectful and empowering leadership of the co-chairs
- The well-paced and meaningful discussions at meetings
- Feeling they could speak frankly and honestly about all topics
- NDIA staff listening to their feedback respectfully and progressing issues.

Things that could have been done better:

- More disability diversity in group membership including a person with intellectual disability on the working group
- Fewer agenda items leaving more time for conversations
- Clearer explanation on how feedback and advice of this group was applied to current work.

Suggested safety / safeguarding priorities for next year

- ‘No more horror stories.’
- Although the group were pleased that work is happening to make the new way of planning better, members reflected on recent experiences of unsafe interactions with the NDIA.
- Urgent attention is needed to improve existing processes: ‘I feel like it's going to be great moving forward for people coming into the NDIA space. But how do we guide it back for those that have already been kind of burned.’
- Doing safeguarding right - being respectful, accessible, inclusive.
- Better information about decision making.
- Getting help to people in a timely manner
- Building the resilience of families and carers.
- Risk assessments informed by people with disability.
- Building or testing resources being developed.

- ‘Safety at the coalface’ - people with disability receive the supports they need, and can exercise choice and make decisions about their own lives:

‘All participants feel confident to voice a complaint, know where and how to do this; and that providers respond proactively to these.’

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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