16 December 2025

“The community do not know what is happening. They do not know what to expect.”

What we talked about

We looked at how the group’s feedback has helped shape NDIA reforms to date. The NDIA team outlined next steps for the new approach to planning and the potential role of the group in 2026.

Topic 1: how feedback has been used

The NDIA team showed how feedback from the group is helping to guide NDIS reforms. This includes improving communication, such as through the NDIS Engage website, to help the community stay involved.

What we heard

- People felt frustrated because they raise the same concerns but do not see any changes.
- They don’t know what happens to their feedback as the current process isn’t clear.
- A clear and accountable process will help to build a sense of trust.

Topic 2: How the NDIS Rules are being developed

Representatives from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) presented on how the NDIS legislative rules are being developed. A public consultation on the NDIS rules will take place from late January to March 2026. DHDA explained the steps that will be taken to have the Rules approved by Parliament.

What we heard

- There was concern that the Support Needs Assessment (SNA) and Budget rules are still being developed just 6 months before the new way of planning starts.
- Rules that shape the new way of planning should be visible early so people can influence them. Consultation must happen early, not after the decisions have already been made.
- Budget calculations should be tested with participants before the rules are final.
- NDIA should give clear, accessible information to participants about the rules.

Topic 3: Ways of working

The group discussed ways of working, including whether the work of the group is true co-design.

What we heard

- The process in the working group often does not feel like real co-design.
- Agenda items should say if it is co-design. The NDIA team agreed to note in advance whether an issue was for co-design, consultation or information-sharing.
- Actions from the meetings are not clear or tracked. The NDIA team agreed to improve this.
- NDIA should be clear about how feedback is used, where it is not used and why.

Topic 4: Future directions for 2026

The NDIA team talked about the work of the Design Hub to test and refine the new way of planning before it is rolled out in mid-2026. The Design Hub was doing SNA ‘simulations’, practicing planning conversations, and consulting on communication materials.

The group talked about possible areas of focus in 2026, including:

- Having input into how the Design Hub works with participants and stakeholders.
- Consulting on the participant experience of transitioning to the new way of planning, including testing participant resources.
- How the NDIA communicates the outcome of an SNA, budget and plan settings.
- Staying updated about the new way of planning.

What we heard

- Testing in the Design Hub must cover the full end-to-end participant journey.
- Cultural safety must prioritised. I-CAN needs testing across different cultures.
- This group wants to be able to influence the transition process, rather than being told after decisions have already been made.
- Joint briefings with NDIA and DHDA would help keep people informed and updated.
- Public information about the new way of planning must be timely and accurate. Announcements that don’t have all the information leads to anxiety in the community.
- Participants should see a draft SNA report before it is finalised, to avoid risk of trauma and harm. This also gives people time to review at their own pace in a way that works for them. This allows for errors to be found early, avoiding lengthy and difficult appeals processes.

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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