28 May 2026

Key themes and insights

1. New framework planning

- Key themes:
  - The NDIA is working closely with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to map out implementation of the proposed legislation to ensure there is a genuine opportunity to engage and communicate changes as a result of the reforms.
  - This includes updating staff training and guidance to build capacity so that changes are communicated and implemented smoothly.
  - The NDIA is strengthening communication with participants and their families about reform by delivering direct, clear, accessible and specific information to reduce uncertainty.
  - The NDIA is expanding Support Needs Assessment testing and will provide clear information to stakeholders to improve their understanding of the testing program.
- Key insights:
  - Members support the delay to the roll out of New Planning Framework until April 2027 but note concerns whether sufficient workforce capacity and capability will be in place to implement the new approach to planning successfully.
  - Members noted that early testing of the Support Needs Assessment didn’t ask how disability affects function or what supports are needed.
  - Members suggested providing progress updates and feedback themes from testing to avoid negative impressions and build trust in the testing program.
  - Members are concerned the Support Needs Assessment may only focus on a single primary impairment, overlooking where impairments are intertwined from multiple conditions that contribute to an individual's support needs.
  - Members highlighted that they have provided feedback on the reforms and New Planning Framework across multiple channels, emphasising that these existing insights should be actively considered and used to support implementation of the new reforms.

2. Working together

- Key themes:
  - The NDIA is reviewing the membership and operations of current NDIA reference, advisory and co-design groups, to ensure engagement is purposeful and outcome focused.

    - NDIA will prioritise working with DRCOs and directly with participants as reforms are introduced.
    - NDIA will work with the DRCO membership working group to agree on some draft ways of working and consider how this approach will work in practice.
    - The proposal is for the DRCO Forum to focus more on strategic discussion and to move information sharing to other channels like online Town Hall events and the Disability Sector Update.
    - This includes building a shared understanding with DRCOs of what is working well and what needs improvement.
    - There are opportunities for small groups of DRCO members to work directly with NDIA service designers to co-design and test New Framework Planning and other reform approaches for key participant groups.
- Key insights:
    - Members emphasised the importance of having the right people in the room, with a mix of perspectives to support meaningful discussion. This includes utilising the skills and expertise of DRCO members ensuring the right representation across reform projects.
    - Members raised the importance of ensuring participant related issues and insights gathered during engagement is used to support collaborative decision-making processes, and influence change.
    - Members highlighted the need for a more structured and targeted approach to recruiting participants to participate in Support Needs Assessment testing via the Design Hub, supporting a more collaborative focused participation.

Attendees

Australian Autism Alliance, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Autistic Self Advocacy Network of Australia and New Zealand, Blind Citizens Australia, Carers Australia, Children and Young People with Disability Australia, Community Mental Health Australia, Deaf Australia, Deafblind Australia, Deafness Forum Australia, Disability Advocacy Network Australia, Down Syndrome Australia, Every Australian Counts, First Peoples Disability Network, Inclusion Australia, JFA Purple Orange, Mental Health Australia, Mental Health Carers Australia, National Ethnic Disability Alliance, National Mental Health Consumer Alliance, Australian Consumers & Carers Mental Health Forum, People with Disability Australia, Physical Disability Australia, Rare Voices Australia, ReImagine Australia, Women with Disabilities Australia, Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, Reform Advisory Committee Co-Chairs.

Apologies: A4 Autism Aspergers, Brain Injury Australia.

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