23 July 2026

The Self-Management Advisory Group (SMAG) met on Thursday, 23 July 2026. The meeting was held online.

Focus of the meeting

The focus of the July meeting was:

- Direct employment.
- Supported Independent Living.
- NDIS reforms.

NDIA update

- In June 2026, The Australian Government announced updates to the NDIA Board:
  - New NDIA Board members are Mr Nigel Ray PSM, Ms Lois Boswell and Ms Jane Spring have been appointed to the NDIA Board.
  - Dr Graeme Innes AM, Dr Richard Fejo and Ms Estelle Pearson will continue as NDIA Board members for another 3-year term.
- The NDIS Quarterly Report Q3 2025–26 for 1 January to 31 March 2026 is now available.
  - The NDIA now has 3 new data dashboards. Data dashboards aim to improve knowledge and understanding of how people with disabilities are experiencing the NDIS. The new data dashboards are:
    - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse | NDIS .
    - First Nations | NDIS .
    - Gender | NDIS .
  - Read the full report on the NDIS website - Quarterly Reports.
- The Government has delayed the rollout of the new way of planning until April 2027.
  - The NDIA is using this time to expand its testing program.
  - The program will test the new way of planning with thousands of people over the coming months.
  - The NDIA wants participants over 18, or their carers and nominees to take part.
  - Please visit NDIS Engage to find out more and sign up.
- The term ‘Short term respite’ has been changed back to ‘Short-term accommodation’ (STA). This change was a result of feedback from the community.
  - The new pricing schedule separates short-term accommodation into different components.
  - The accommodation component includes separate items for participant and support worker accommodation.

    - The change makes sure that funding is only used for NDIS supports.
    - Funding for STA cannot be used to pay for holiday packages, holiday accommodation, airfares, meals, or activities.
    - You can find out more on the NDIS website What is short-term accommodation.
- Programs of support – more flexibility for participants in shared accommodation:
    - A program of support is an optional agreement between a participant and a provider for up to six months. It is used for certain group-based supports.
    - Right now, programs of support can be used for:
        - Supported Independent Living (SIL).
        - Supports in the Social, Economic and Community Participation category (including employment supports).
        - Any supports in Capacity Building categories.
    - From 1 July 2026, programs of support can also be used for:
        - Daily Personal Activities support delivered in a shared accommodation setting.
    - Participants can leave a program of support at any time, with no cost, by giving up to two weeks' notice.
    - A new agreement can be made at any time if both the participant and provider agree.
    - This change will make sure participants can access the supports they need.
    - You can find more information here – More flexibility for participants in shared accommodation.

Direct employment

The NDIA discussed the important role direct employment has in supporting participant choice and control. Direct employment is where a participant or nominee employs their own workers to provide the support they need instead of using a service provider.

The NDIA wants to improve information and guidance for participants who have direct employment arrangements. This includes information about:

- What costs participants who employ their own staff can claim from their NDIS plan.
- Participant responsibilities as an employer.
- Insurance and other legal requirements.
- Access to support and advice.

Member feedback included:

- Direct employment is an important option for people with complex support needs when suitable support from a service provider is not available.
- Information needs to be practical, consistent and easy to access.
- Participants may benefit from free access to specialist advice, training and resources.

- Policies should support flexible approaches that respond to individual needs.
- Direct employment arrangements should recognise the many different ways participants organise and manage their supports.
- Make sure a large range of employment related costs are covered by the NDIS.

Supported Independent Living (SIL) update

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (Commission) provided an update on mandatory registration for SIL providers.

All providers who deliver SIL support and provide NDIS digital platform services will need to be registered with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

- If a provider is not already registered, they will need to start the registration process by 1 October 2026.
- If a provider decides not to register, participants will need to change their providers.
- Participants can also check a provider's registration status by using the: Find a registered provider page on the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website .

The Commission also discussed:

- Registration requirements.
- Implementation of new practice standards.
- Guidance and communication to participants, families and providers.
- Ongoing confusion about registration requirements and advised that further information will be released.

Member feedback included:

- Participants and families need clear advice about when registration is required.
- Information should be easy to find and understand.
- Participants and families should continue to have opportunities to raise concerns and provide feedback about this change.
- Continued communication will be important as registration changes are implemented.

Question and answer session with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA)

DHDA discussed NDIS reforms, including self-directed supports and future policy settings.

The discussion also covered:

- Proposed legislative changes to the NDIS, including support determinations.
- Community participation supports.
- Mandatory registration requirements.
- Individualised living arrangements.
- Automated decision making.
- Worker screening.
- Restrictive practices and safeguarding.

Member feedback included:

- The difference between self-direction and self-management should be clearly explained.
- Changes to the NDIS must continue to support participant choice and control.
- The impact of the changes to the NDIS have on participants with complex support needs should be carefully considered.
- Individual support and living arrangements should continue to be supported.
- Participants and the disability community need to be involved in the development of the changes to the NDIS that are currently happening.

Next meeting

The next SMAG meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 17 September 2026

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