21 May 2026

> “…what is the Agency’s plan for retention of staff … retaining… the cultural knowledge and the Agency knowledge?” Group member

What we talked about

First Nations Connect

The NDIA discussed the First Nations Connect initiative. The initiative aims to improve respectful access to information on the NDIS and includes a new First Nations phone service, 1800 411 640. The NDIA designed the approach using feedback from more than 230 participants, family members, and staff.

What we heard

- While broader engagement activities took place, opportunities for this specific group to contribute to the rollout were more limited. Members felt implementation progressed quickly but welcomed the opportunity for their input to inform Phase 2.
- Members highlighted the importance of having First Nations peoples staffing a First Nations contact line, noting that lived experience and cultural understanding are vital to culturally responsive services. They emphasised the benefits of Indigenous leadership in these areas. Members also suggested ongoing mentoring, cultural supervision, and practical on-the-job guidance to further strengthen cultural capability and safety.
- Members raised broader workforce considerations, including the need for more accessible pathways into First Nations employment. They emphasised the value of long-term Indigenous-led workforce development initiatives.
- Members suggested community-led approaches, such as local community champions, to engage and inform First Nations communities about the new contact line.
- Members noted it would be important for the First Nations contact line to be responsive as long wait times would make it more difficult for participants and carers to access support and could impact user experience.
- Members noted that across the National Contact Centre, and more broadly, workforce stability and knowledge continuity are important for maintaining high-quality culturally safe support. They suggested exploring approaches that support staff retention and wellbeing.
- Members emphasised the importance of involving First Nations peoples early and meaningfully in design and delivery processes, noting that co-design works best when it supports genuine partnerships and shared decision-making

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