CALD Strategy 2023-2027

Discover Phase Report

September 2022

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Contents

Context

The Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD) Strategy is the NDIA's public commitment to working alongside people with disability from CALD backgrounds, to achieve outcomes from the NDIS on an equal basis with the broader population. We recognise that CALD means people who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

The first CALD Strategy (the strategy) was developed in 2018 during Scheme transition, through consultation with key stakeholders.

A progress update was released in July 2021 which described the NDIA's activities supporting CALD communities, and next priorities to further drive the strategy.

This update confirms our commitment to developing a new strategy and working with participants, families, carers, and sector stakeholders from late 2021.

This strategy will set out the actions and plans needed to meet our goals. This strategy is due to be completed in early 2023.

Approach

The NDIA started a co-design process to develop our new CALD Strategy in late 2021.

The term co-design has different meanings for different people. It generally means involving participants and key stakeholders in understanding the problem you are trying to solve and working together to agree and deliver solutions.

The NDIA Engagement Framework details our approach to co-design. This framework has been developed by the NDIA in consultation with the Co-Design Advisory Group, Disability Representative and Carers Organisations, NDIS Independent Advisory Council and The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI).

Together with CALD participants[1], nominees, families, and carers as well as providers and sector stakeholders, we are co-designing a new strategy and action plan that will support improved outcomes for CALD participants.

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[1] For the purposes of this report, participants include children younger than 7.

Our approach has three phases:

1. **discover** the challenges facing our participants and stakeholder
2. **develop** solutions with participants and stakeholders
3. **deliver and evaluate** the new CALD strategy with our participants and stakeholders.

In late 2021 the discover phase of developing the new strategy began.

Workshops, focus groups and one-to-one discussions

From October to December 2021, we held workshops, focus groups and one-to-one discussions with:

- participants
- the NDIA's Disability Representative and Carers Organisation Forum
- carers and organisations working with CALD people including non-disability specific organisations.

The engagement sessions encouraged participants from CALD backgrounds to share their NDIS experiences and provide feedback on what is working well and what could be improved.

Independent Advisory Council

We also attended the Equity and Inclusion Reference Group's cultural and linguistic diversity workshops, as an observer to listen and learn. These were held by the Independent Advisory Council to the NDIS.

These workshops will inform the new strategy as well as the *Improving Equity in the NDIS* report that will be published in 2023 by the Independent Advisory Council to the NDIS.

CALD roundtables

On 18 February 2022, we hosted a roundtable to discuss the new strategy.

The purpose of the roundtable was to:

- reflect on the themes identified through earlier consultation
- identify shared goals to inform the new strategy and action plan.

We partnered with the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) to coordinate and conduct the roundtable event. Cultural Perspectives Pty Ltd, a research, communications and consulting agency with expertise in reaching CALD audiences was engaged by NDIA to lead discussion at the CALD Strategy Roundtable.

Following the roundtable, we further developed the themes and goals, reflecting on feedback from stakeholders.

We shared a draft version of this report with revised themes and goals with the roundtable stakeholders for review. Between 17 and 19 May 2022 we held three 'drop-in' online feedback sessions to discuss the draft report in detail with stakeholders.

Feedback from these sessions was noted and considered. Some of the suggestions were used to refine the theme descriptions and goals, while others have been recorded for reference during the Develop phase of developing the new strategy.

On 24 May 2022, we hosted a second roundtable to conclude the Discover phase of developing the new strategy. This was also independently facilitated by Cultural Perspectives.

The group of stakeholders:

- endorsed the themes and goals
- agreed a broad approach to governance.

These themes and goals will now be taken into co-design where we will develop solutions and actions with CALD participants, families and carers, and the sector.

Discover summary

These early discovery activities identified six initial areas of challenge and opportunity:

1. Unaware of, uncertain of or seeing no need to engage with the NDIS
2. NDIS frontline worker skills and capability
3. Need for accessible communication
4. Improving cultural awareness and general inclusion
5. CALD market availability and service provision
6. Data and reporting.

These were the basis for discussion at the CALD Strategy Roundtable, with the CALD community and NDIA exploring future direction and goals.

Subsequently, these six areas were refined into five themes, each with corresponding goals. These are described later in this report.

Stakeholder discussions identified the following key points.

- The NDIS is complex and even when communications are available in-language, they are not meeting the needs of people who identify as CALD.
- NDIS systems and processes are not as inclusive to people from CALD backgrounds.
- NDIS frontline staff do not always fully understand cultural context and respond appropriately to cultural needs.
- The provider market is limited in meeting specialist CALD disability support needs.
- The definition of CALD used by the NDIA is not broad enough to properly identify people from CALD backgrounds. There is a lack of stakeholder awareness of publicly available NDIS data related to those from CALD background.

Focus areas to be considered at the next stage:

- Better understanding of communication needs and how communication resources can be developed to translate meaningfully across language and culture.
- Culturally appropriate and responsive inclusive practice should be a key consideration in structural, policy and procedural decisions within and across the NDIA and its partners.

- Supporting ongoing learning and development of NDIA and partner staff to understand and appropriately respond to cultural and linguistic context and needs.
- Providing more choice and control to participants needing specialist CALD disability supports.
- Improved availability and currency of data to support understanding of CALD participants and their needs.

Action areas and goals

- We are committed to addressing the challenges through co-design, to improve the experience and outcomes of the CALD community including participants, their families, and carers.
- Feedback from the original 2018 strategy suggested a clearly defined action plan was needed, to show how we would work towards our shared vision.
- Based on feedback received at the first roundtable event, the six areas of challenge and opportunity were refined into five themes. These themes were identified as critical to address through co-design.
- We recognise that as we work towards agreed solutions, we must consider how these solutions may support intersectionality and/or redress systemic power imbalances that can affect CALD participants and their interactions with the NDIA.
- Together we will work towards agreed solutions to improve the NDIS for the benefit of participants from CALD backgrounds in the following areas.

Theme 1: Infrastructure

Cultural and linguistic considerations should be consistently embedded into NDIA and partner systems, policies and procedures.

You told us that cultural and linguistic considerations need to be consistently met in interactions with the NDIA or partner organisations, and that our approach needs to be person-centred and meet the cultural intersectionality needs of our participants.

- Australia's disability system and the NDIS may be difficult to understand because the terminology used is complex and people have differing understandings of disability.
- NDIS infrastructure needs to have the flexibility to meet the needs of people from CALD backgrounds whose belief system, understanding of disability, and family roles and traditions may differ across cultural systems. As an example, the current technology used for NDIA surveys cannot apply different languages.
- There is need for a cultural safety framework to underpin services provided by the NDIA and our partners to support access to the NDIS and planning activities.

Agreed goals

1. NDIS policies, procedures and ICT systems enable equitable access and participation for CALD participants (including for access, planning and implementation). This means that cultural and linguistic considerations are continually and effectively implemented to promote culturally safe and welcoming experiences with the NDIA and our partner organisations.
2. There are agreed definitions of cultural safety as well as culturally appropriate and responsive service. These definitions will be developed through co-design and agreed between the NDIA and stakeholders.

Theme 2: Staff capability

NDIA staff and partners should have the understanding and capability to provide a culturally safe and responsive service to participants and their families when working with the NDIS.

You told us that our people do not always get things right. You want the NDIA and partner organisations to build a workforce capable of providing culturally safe services. You shared that when we talk about NDIA staff, we must think about frontline and back of house staff, as well as management and Board.

- Participants, their families, and carers require greater access to frontline NDIA staff and partners who have the cultural understanding and capability they need.
- All staff in the NDIA and partner organisations need to embed a culture of continuous learning and training with respect to cultural safety and inclusion within the NDIS.

Agreed goals

1. NDIS staff consistently understand and act on the cultural and language needs of participants and how that may affect their disability supports.
2. Cultural safety and trauma informed practice is consistently demonstrated across the NDIA and its partner organisations. For example, NDIA management retaining culturally responsive staff, encouraging and demonstrating culturally safe and trauma informed practices, and frontline service delivery staff understanding and actively applying culturally safe and responsive practices.

Theme 3: Accessible communications

Disability concepts and NDIS communications should appropriately reflect cultural contexts to meet CALD participants' communication and language needs.

You told us your voice is not being heard because NDIS words and concepts are unfamiliar to people from all CALD backgrounds. We need to understand historical cultural beliefs and attitudes about disability and use these as a starting point to engage CALD communities about current views and approaches to disability.

Many of the concepts used by the disability sector and the NDIS need to reflect multiple cultures and context.

- Participants report that NDIS terminology does not translate well across language. We need to examine how in-language resources and plain English content can be made more available and better support CALD participants across all stages of the NDIS pathway. This includes at the pre-access stage when there may be limited or no awareness of NDIS.

- Resources and better support need to be available to interpreters so our conversations with participants are meaningful and on-message both culturally and linguistically. Confidentiality and privacy issues need to be fully considered when using an interpreter.

- Current NDIS communication channels and communications are not reaching CALD audiences effectively. A more targeted approach to reach CALD audiences, is needed. We also need to increase understanding of the NDIS in a culturally relevant way that makes sense to all people.

- We need to think broadly about communications and how to reach those people who are most marginalised and disadvantaged. This might include in-person or virtual communications or interactions, as well as digital communication channels like social media that are used by the NDIS or CALD communities.

Agreed goals

1. Effective communication channels for the CALD community and participants are identified and used in the NDIA's broader communications and engagement planning.
2. There is an increase in participant and community awareness and use of interpreting services available through NDIS.
3. Required in-language resources and plain English content is identified and developed to support CALD participants along the NDIS pathway.

Theme 4: Markets

Improved availability and provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate NDIS services is needed in the marketplace.

You told us that you do not always have choice and control when selecting your supports because there are limited supports available that meet your cultural and linguistic needs. You are also concerned about the support available to service providers to enhance the quality of supports to CALD participants.

- People with disability from CALD backgrounds need more help in identifying and choosing providers who specialise in culturally specific supports.
- More service providers offering quality specialist CALD supports are needed in the marketplace.

Agreed goals

1. The NDIA better supports CALD participants to identify providers of disability-related supports that offer a culturally safe and appropriate service (e.g. through the provider finder tool).
2. There is an increase in the number of providers offering quality service that is culturally appropriate, responsive and safe for all CALD participants.

Theme 5: Data

Improved availability and currency of data is required to support the understanding of CALD participants and their needs and to improve services.

You told us that participants may be culturally diverse, linguistically diverse or both. You also told us that you want improved access to quality data.

- Data needs to fully capture cultural and language characteristics. The right data collection questions need to be asked to achieve this.
- More support is needed to help people understand what data is available and how to use it.
- The NDIA has legal obligations related to how data is collected and shared. These obligations must be met to protect participant privacy.

Agreed goals

1. The NDIA uses a standard definition of CALD that supports the collection of useful and accurate data.
2. Data can be used by the NDIA and stakeholders to improve services and to plan, deliver, and evaluate the experience and outcomes for CALD participants.
3. There is improved access to and knowledge of data relating to CALD communities and the disability sector that supports evidence-based decision making.

Next steps

- We will begin the Develop phase with the CALD community. We will explore, build, and test solution areas and possible actions to support improved outcomes for CALD participants.
- We will set up an External Advisory Group of stakeholders across Australia representing CALD participants, disability groups, CALD groups, and people with specialist knowledge of CALD issues. The Advisory Group will provide strategic advice, governance and oversight for the co-design and development of the CALD Strategy.
- We will continue to work together with CALD participants, potential participants, nominees, families and carers, and the sector **to co-design the new CALD Strategy and Action Plan.**
- Co-design will include tailored governance arrangements involving CALD community stakeholders and targeted activities with participants and families who speak languages other than English.