NDIS reforms boosted by greater investment in co-design with disability representative organisations

6 June 2024

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has strengthened investment in co-designing key reforms to the NDIS, through a funding boost for Disability Representative and Carer Organisations (DRCOs).

The 27 organisations, who will receive up to $10.7 million of funding, collectively represent thousands of people with disability and their families.

Minister for the NDIS, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, the NDIA, the Department of Social Services (DSS), the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NQSC), DRCOs and members of the Independent Advisory Council (IAC) have also outlined a shared commitment to the approach to working together on reforms identified in the NDIS Review and proposed in a Bill before the Parliament.

Minister Shorten, said co-designing with people with disability and the disability community is critical to the success of transformational reform needed to the NDIS.

“Organisations led by and who represent people with disability, their families and carers are invaluable in guiding the Scheme in a way that works for all participant and reflects the Government’s commitment to include people with disability in co-design – as enshrined in the NDIS Act.

“The two-year funding commitment demonstrates my commitment to continuing to work with participants, families and their carers to strengthen the Scheme.”

The additional funding will help build on the co-design work already being done on reforms and improvements to the NDIS, including:

- 6 Reform for Outcomes co-design working groups considering issues such as workforce capability and culture, informing the crackdown on fraud initiatives, and making improvements to planning processes, home and living evidence submission processes and more.
- Improvements to the NDIA recruitment processes to make it more accessible and inclusive for people with disability.
- Redesign of the NDIS plan and plan approval letter, expected to be released in July.
- The recently released NDIS Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Strategy.

The 27 DRCOs represent a wide range of disability groups and services and includes Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA), Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) and other peak organisations.

Acting CEO of DANA, El Gibbs, said it is important for changes to the NDIS to be informed by the people most impacted by the Scheme.

“DANA welcomes the additional resources for disability representative organisations as we work on co-design on NDIS reforms. This funding will enable DANA to include the expertise of our members, independent disability advocacy organisations, about how these changes are being felt by people with disability in local communities,” Ms Gibbs said.

The NDIA works with participants, families, carers, supporters and the public in a range of different ways to design and implement changes to the scheme.

This includes workshops, surveys, research and targeted approaches to hear from under-represented participants and groups.

The Have Your Say page of the NDIS website shows projects open for public consultation, or people can join Participant First, an initiative where the Agency provides opportunities for feedback on improvements. There will be new engagement opportunities coming soon for participants and the wider community to take part in.

Those interested in joining can fill out a web form on the NDIS website.

“Co-design means we make better, more informed decisions and that people have greater ownership of the decisions made,” Minister Shorten said.

The NDIA will share information about opportunities to be part of co-design activities and keep the community informed about the progress of our co-design and consultation work.

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