NAIDOC Week a time to celebrate and reflect on how the NDIS supports First Nations peoples

13 July 2024

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) the Hon. Bill Shorten has marked NAIDOC Week by acknowledging the importance First Nations participants play in the future of the Scheme.

“NAIDOC Week is a celebration of the continuation of the oldest culture in the world and is celebrated not only in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, but by Australians from all walks of life.” Minister Shorten said.

The theme of this year’s NAIDOC week is ‘Keep the fire burning! Blak, loud and proud’.

“First Nations peoples are having a big say in how we make the NDIS stronger so that it meets their needs—and so that it remains a world leading, culturally responsible and accessible Scheme,” Minister Shorten said.

With the NDIS now supporting over 51,000 First Nations participants, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has established a new First Nations Group and appointed Dr Janine Mohamed as Deputy CEO and First Nations Champion.

The Group has prioritised the Agency’s attention on the experiences, perspectives and interests of First Nations peoples, and on ensuring every person eligible can get access to a culturally safe Scheme that values and respects First Nations peoples.

A proud Narrunga Kaurna woman from South Australia, Dr Mohamed said she was honoured to lead the Group, and Agency, in NAIDOC Week celebrations.

“NAIDOC Week is a time to celebrate all that we have achieved and continue to achieve as First Nations peoples. A time to honour and be loud and proud about our strengths and the positive impact we make on the whole nation,” Dr Mohamed said.

A key outcome of the NDIA’s approach will be the co-design of a new First Nations Strategy.

In working closely with First Nations peoples with disability, their carers, families, communities and organisations, Minister Shorten said the NDIA was learning from the experts to improve delivery of the NDIS in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.

“It is absolutely fantastic we have strong representation of First Nations peoples guiding the NDIS, including Dr. Mohamed and NDIA Board Member Dr. Richard Fejo— and through strong advisory channels, Minister Shorten said.

“It is imperative we continue to listen to and work closely with First Nations participants and their supporters to co-design changes to the NDIS, to reform it so it’s one we can all be loud and proud of.”

To find out more on some on the ways the NDIS is supporting First Nations people with disability, see Angelica's story here.

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