19 February 2025

Key Themes and Insights

Current issues

Key themes: Scheme Reform and introduction of new planning framework.

- From 1 Jan 2025, impairment notices are being provided to all new participants.
- The NDIA is inviting an expression of interest from DRCOs to attend smaller group discussions to understand how diagnosis is being mapped and translated into impairment categories outlined in the NDIS Act.
- Support needs assessment tool procurement was opened earlier in February.
- The NDIA is preparing for the Agency's transition to the new planning framework from late 2025. Transition will occur over a 5-year period.

Key Insights:

- Members were interested in learning more about how the NDIA is making decisions about notices of impairments and sought assurance that notices will incorporate more than one impairment category. They highlighted the importance of sharing information about impairment notices ahead of contact with existing individual participants.
- Concerns the Agency is reassessing and changing participant plan management type without any discussion with the participant.
- Concerns there are issues with the participant portal and inability to track expenditure across all budgets.

NDIS Children and Young People Reform approach, led by Children’s Pathways

Key Themes:

- Work is currently in the early stages of a two-year design cycle for the development of the pathway, with the establishment of the Children’s Expert Advisory Group in July 2024.
- Key areas to address have been broken down into four components:
    - Strengthening access, especially for children with developmental delay.
    - Tailored approach to assessing children’s support needs.
    - Regulatory parameters to ensure quality of early intervention supports.
    - New ways of monitoring outcomes to ensure good outcomes.

Key Insights:

- Concerns that children with permanent disabilities who have entered the Scheme via early intervention pathways will have to go through eligibility reassessments to transition into the full scheme.
- Expressed the importance of hearing from diverse groups of children and their families, especially children and young people with intellectual disabilities.
- Concerns that preventive support won't be provided for children with permanent disability until a functional impact has been identified.

NDIS Justice Panel discussion, led Specialised Service Delivery

Key Themes:

- The panel meets bimonthly and designed to examine policy and systemic issues across state and federal justice interfaces, using case studies to provide the NDIA with advice.
- The NDIA is exploring ways to include a panel member with lived experience, and opportunities for seasonal members to deliver expert advice.

Key Insights:

- The Agency needs to ensure there is First Nations representation on the panel.
- Concerned about amendments made to the NDIS legislation around justice and welcome the opportunity of continuing to work together.

4. Welcome and Update from the NDIS Minister, The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP

Key Themes:

- Continued commitment to put participants at the centre of the scheme throughout scheme sustainability reforms, while ensuring work outside the NDIS (Disability Royal Commission, National Disability Strategy) also progresses.
- Reflected the complexity of psychosocial supports and work being done in Department of Social Services with state and territory governments.

Key Insights:

- Concern that there isn't enough urgency in the Government's response to the Disability Royal Commission recommendations.
- Keen to understand how the Government is working to address the gaps identified in the unmet needs analysis to prevent supports (inside/outside the NDIS) from being fragmented.

- Concerned there isn’t much discussion with DRCOs about reforms to NDIS and state and territory systems interfaces, particularly on the design of foundational supports, navigation and joined-up systems.
- Concerns over the pace of reforms and ability to engage through genuine co-design.

DRCO 2025 workplan discussion, led by Jeff Smith CEO DANA

Key themes: The DRCO Secretariat sought feedback on DRCO membership eligibility criteria.

- DRCO secretariat discussed changes to the DRCO membership criteria.
- Establishment of two new evaluation working groups for section 10 and section 33.
- Revised the working groups plan purpose to capture diverse and intersectional experiences more holistically.

Key Insights:

- Need to establish who is assessing the selection criteria.
- Suggested to do informative mapping of current DRCOs to identify potential gaps in selection criteria.
- NDIA suggested a conversation about the change process to identify areas of focus.
- Concerns over the inconsistent rolling out of the updated national construction code.

DRCO Forum Terms of Reference discussion

Key themes:

- The DRCO Secretariat sought and incorporated feedback on DRCO Terms of Reference (TOR).
- NDIA updated the co-design principles to include how the joint secretariat operationalises the working groups and how they report back.
- NDIA updated the ways of working section to reflect the commitment to safety and inclusion.

Key Insights:

- Update the TOR to include:
    - reference to the role of carers while centring people with disability.
    - Co-design principles to include a feedback loop.
    - Co-design principles should apply to all engagement styles.
    - Update glossary definitions to include definition of ‘people with disability

Actions from this meeting

Action	Details	Responsibility	Status
1	NDIA to arrange small out of session briefings on primary diagnosis impairment categories mapping and provide DRCOs with internal guidance on impairment mapping.	NDIA Secretariat	In progress – to occur in March and April
2	NDIA to organise a discussion on scope of Navigators before the next co-design working group.	NDIA Secretariat	
3	Provide DRCOs with an example of Notice of Impairment.	NDIA Secretariat	
4	Provide DRCOs with information on changes to plan management arrangements.	NDIA Secretariat	
5	NDIA to follow up question regarding what is displayed in the PACE Participant Portal budget tracker, and the inability to track expenditure across all budgets.	NDIA Secretariat	Completed
6	Circulate the Justice Transition Recommendation Report with the DRCOs.	NDIA Secretariat	Completed
7	Specialised Service Delivery to attend an Inclusion Australia justice group meeting.	NDIA Secretariat	

8	Provide DRCOs with updates on initiatives with the Justice Panel as the group advances.	NDIA Secretariat	
9	Provide DRCOs with updates on Justice Panel experts and their leadership representation.	NDIA Secretariat	
10	Update the Terms of Reference and membership criteria, including a glossary with appropriate definitions	NDIA Secretariat	
11	Circulate updated Terms of Reference with DRCOs to be taken as endorsed.	NDIA Secretariat	
12	Gather and provide questions from DRCOs for the Minister that got missed during the discussion.	NDIA Secretariat	
13	NDIA to communicate response from the Minister regarding foundational supports discussions with the states and territories.	NDIA Secretariat	
14	Children's Taskforce to provide updates to DRCOs as reforms advance.	NDIA Secretariat	

Attendees

A4 Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Autistic Self Advocacy Network of Australia and New Zealand, Blind Citizens Australia, Brain Injury Australia, Carers Australia, Children and Young People with Disability Australia, Community Mental Health Australia, Deaf Australia, Deafblind Australia, Disability Advocacy Network Australia, Down Syndrome Australia, Every Australian Counts, Inclusion Australia, JFA Purple Orange, Mental Health Australia, National Ethnic Disability Alliance, National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, People with

Disability Australia, Physical Disability Australia, ReImagine Australia, Self Advocacy Resource Unit, Women with Disabilities Australia, Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance

Apologies: Australian Autism Alliance, Deafness Forum Australia

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