29 April 2025

The Supported Decision Making Advisory Group (SDMAG) met for the first time on 29 April 2025.

The meeting was held online.

Focus of the meeting

The meeting covered:

- Ways of Working
- Supported decision making policy and NDIS reforms
- New planning framework.

Ways of working

The Chair, Ms Laura Wilkinson, NDIA, General Manager, Service Design discussed the role of the SDMAG.

The group discussed the outputs and outcomes to be achieved, and the cadence of meetings.

Nomination of Ms Catherine McAlpine, CEO, Inclusion Australia for Co-chair was put to the group and her election was endorsed.

Ms Wilkinson sought feedback from the group on both the Draft Terms of Reference and Draft Workplan.

Both Terms of Reference and Workplan were reviewed and endorsed.

Supported Decision Making Policy and NDIS Reforms

The NDIA led a discussion on how it will align implementing the supported decision making approach and commitments made in the Supported Decision Making Policy into the Scheme Reforms that the Agency is rolling out over the next five years.

The focus of the Supported Decision Making Policy is that participants are the experts in their own lives and ensuring participants have the right supports at all stages of their NDIS experience to make their own decisions.

The NDIA has collected a broad range of feedback from participants and the community, identifying a number of actions aligned to the policy and has committed to implementing the following:

- Safe and Supported Decision Making.

- Accessible and capacity building communications.
- Streamlined and efficient support from the Agency.
- Ways the NDIA can prove and demonstrate to people that the NDIS understands their disability.

New Planning Framework

The NDIA gave an overview of the proposed planning experience for participants.

The presentation included a comparison of old planning and new planning framework including:

- Assessments – Currently participants pay for assessments and reports out of their plan. In future, there will be a Support Needs Assessment, conducted by the NDIS at no cost to participants, as recommended in the NDIS review.
- Budgets – Currently budgets are based on functional capacity that informs individual reasonable and necessary supports. In future, budgets will be based on Support Needs Assessments that inform the total reasonable and necessary package of supports.
- Budget flexibility – Currently funds are restricted to 19 support categories. In future, funds can be used flexibly across different supports in a flexible budget.
- Allocation of funding – Currently participants can access the total approved funding amount from plan approval. Plans are typically 12-24 months long. In future, funds will become available to participants over pre-set intervals. The funds will rollover if unspent. Where appropriate, participants will receive longer plans (i.e. 3-5 years).

SDMAG next meeting

The SDMAG’s next meeting is 5 June 2025.

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