3 November 2025

The Rural and Remote Advisory Group met on 3 November for the fifth meeting of the year.

The meeting was held online.

Focus of the meeting

The focus of the November meeting was:

- Alternative Commissioning trial sites
- Isolated Towns Pricing Classifications.

Alternative Commissioning Trial Sites

In the 2023 NDIS Review, it was identified that traditional market-based service models were not meeting the needs of remote and First Nations communities. In response, the Agency committed to trialling Alternative Commissioning. This is a place-based, community-led approach to service delivery that prioritises cultural safety, local governance, and improved access.

The NDIA presented information on two Alternative Commissioning trial sites in Katanning and Maningrida.

Member feedback included:

- Noted feedback from a participant about improved trust in the NDIA within the community.
- Benefits of being able to speak to a NDIA staff member locally who can follow up is critical to improving outcomes for regional and remote participants.
- Support for “humanising” the NDIS through more local engagement and presence.

Isolated Towns Pricing Classifications

The NDIA gave a presentation on work underway to update pricing arrangements for isolated remote towns.

Pricing for NDIS services is affected by remoteness, with price loadings of 40% and 50% applying for services in Modified Monash Model (MMM) 6 and 7 locations (respectively). Isolated towns do not automatically get captured by this classification, so the NDIA is revising its policy on when additional price loading should be applied.

The NDIA is interested in the RRAG’s advice on the types of features that would justify additional price loading.

Member feedback included:

- Locations where the current travel pricing does not cover the travel distances / time to reach town from the nearest major town/city
- Locations where no local service provider is available for a service type
- Locations where waitlists or thin markets mean participants cannot access services that are in their plan.

Rural Remote Advisory Group next meeting

The Rural Remote Advisory Group's next meeting is to be confirmed in 2026.

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