17 April 2025

The Autism Advisory Group (AAG) met on 17 April 2025 for the second meeting of the year. The meeting was held online.

Focus of the meeting

The focus of the April meeting was:

- A report back from the National Autism Guidelines Working Group
- A presentation about the NDIS Rules: Department of Social Services Engagement Strategy
- An update on the NDIA Co-design Reset
- An update on the Children's Pathway.

Report back from National Autism Guidelines Working Group

An update was provided on the National Autism Guidelines Working Group.

- The last two meetings focused on discussions on access initiatives, including improving the Access Pathway and Notices of Impairment.
- The NDIA Access Initiative Team provided an update on their work to date and sought feedback from the group.
- Members provided advice about the development and communication of Notices of Impairment including the importance of a neurodiversity affirming approach.
- Capability uplift was identified as the next area of focus. The group is seeking feedback on how to build the capability of the Agency's future Assessor Workforce.

NDIS Rules: Department of Social Services Engagement Strategy

The Department of Social Services (DSS) gave a presentation to members about the current proposed DSS Engagement Strategy and schedule for the NDIS Rules and sought feedback from members on how to best engage with people with Autism. Members discussed:

The role of the DSS is to work closely with the NDIA. This includes, listening to feedback that is gathered through the wide and varying engagement channels and working with the Agency to develop policy and materials to communicate, test and consult on the scope of what will be the NDIS Rules.

Regular meetings are being held with the NDIA and states and territories to discuss a range of reforms and to ensure that engagement is timely, inclusive and respectful.

NDIA Co-design Reset

The NDIA gave a presentation on the NDIA Co-design program for 2025. This included an overview of the New Parents and Carers Engagement Group.

- Feedback was sought on topics the AAG would like to be involved in and how the Agency can build on opportunities to engage with the AAG and other networks.
- The NDIA led a discussion on the NDIS Reform Agenda and what is required to achieve the new framework planning and to maximise opportunities to involve the disability sector and participants to ensure they are informing the Reform Road Map.

Children’s Pathway Update

The NDIA shared an overview on the Children’s Pathway reforms and the approach around designing a new early intervention pathway for children younger than 9.

- The NDIA led a discussion about progressing the design of an end-to-end pathway for children younger than 9, for all children receiving early intervention as part of their early developmental years and, at the same time, ensuring certainty for children who are going to need longer term support.
- The team is in the early stages of a 2-year design cycle and currently focusing on stakeholder engagement to inform the early design.
- Discussions included the importance of planning for engagement with particular focus on parents and carers with lived experience of having a child in the Scheme as it will ensure the Agency draws on their insights and experience through that pathway.

Autism Advisory Group next meeting

The Autism Advisory Group’s next meeting is on 18 June 2025.

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