24 February 2026

The Autism Advisory Group (AAG) met on Tuesday, 24 February 2026. The meeting was held online.

Focus of the meeting

The February 2026 meeting focused on:

- NDIA update.
- National Autism Guidelines Working Group progress report.
- 2026 Workplan review.
- Consultation on Improving Service Agreements.

NDIA update

Graeme Head AO introduced himself as the new National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) CEO. He spoke about his career in government, social and environmental policy.

National Autism Guidelines Working Group

The NDIA talked about work the National Autism Guidelines Working Group did in 2025. The Group focused on three main topics:

- Raising NDIA staff awareness of the Autism Guidelines.
- Giving feedback on changes to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) access.
- How the NDIA will talk about impairment notices as part of the new way of planning.

The NDIA suggested closing the Working Group and adding some of the topics to the AAG Workplan for 2026. The NDIA will talk with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) to see how the Working Group's advice can help make government programs and services more consistent.

Member feedback included:

- Make sure National Autism Working Group advice is clear, so the work does not stop when the group finishes.
- The NDIA and the DHDA should keep working closely together so autistic people get the same quality of support across different services.

2026 Workplan review

The AAG members talked about the work they need to do at each meeting in 2026.

Members suggested the NDIA:

- Work with the AAG members on projects earlier so their advice can help improve how the NDIS works for people with autism.
- Give clear and timely updates so the autism community understands what changes are happening.
- Share updates on the Support Needs Assessment testing and results.
- Explain which participants will move to the new way of planning first work with AAG members to identify and minimise risks.
- Show how a strength-based Support Needs Assessment will lead to fair plans for participants.

Improving service agreements

A service agreement is a written agreement between a NDIS participant and a provider. A service agreement explains what support the provider will give and how much it will cost. It also says how and when the support will be given and what to do if something goes wrong or needs to change.

The NDIA wants to make service agreements easier to understand and be fairer for participants.

The NDIA is working with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on this project.

The project will:

- Create a simple template for participants and providers to use.
- Create information and other resources to help participants understand their rights when signing a service agreement.
- Explain what to do when something goes wrong.

Member feedback included:

- Make sure service agreements use simple language with key information separate from legal terms.
- Create tools like flow charts, videos and simple guides to help participants understand what to do if something goes wrong.
- Help autistic people feel safe and confident to ask questions.
- Make sure providers use clear and fair service agreements.

Next meeting

The next AAG meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 26 May 2026.

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