16 March 2026

Who we met with

Disability Representative and Carer Organisations, Independent Advisory Council members and NDIA staff.

What we heard

Topic 1: NDIA Engagement Framework update

- Members considered feedback about proposed changes to the NDIA Engagement Framework (the framework) and what is needed to finalise it.
- The NDIA should better explain the division of responsibilities for disability reform across government, including the Department of Health Disability and Ageing (DHDA), the NDIA, and the National Quality and Safeguards Commission (NQSC), noting some decisions were outside NDIA control.
- The NDIA Participant Service Charter, which outlines the NDIA's commitment to customer service, should align with the framework to guide staff engagement with participants. Stakeholder engagement and routine participant engagement (e.g. plan discussions) should be clearly differentiated.
- The NDIA should commit to engage CALD and less heard voices in NDIS reforms and report on it to not risk their exclusion. The NDIA said the CALD External Advisory Group provides quarterly engagement reports and offers data and thematic analysis.
- The framework should include aspirations of how people wanted to feel through engagement. Objectives should be actionable and measurable. An evaluation report card should be delivered annually.
- The framework should 'centre' rather than just 'include' people with disability in decision-making. Principles should include culturally safe and trauma-informed engagement with a clear link to the NDIA First Nations Engagement Framework.
- Development of an evaluation framework should be considered, building on the continuous improvement framework in place for co-design.
- The framework should provide clarity on the NDIA-supplied documents that could and could not be shared by members of engagement groups with their broader networks.
- When promoting the framework, people will want clarity on:
    - what the framework is for and how it will be used
    - what it means for different people (e.g. DRCOs, participants, providers)
    - how it was developed and what engagements informed it

    - whether it is final or still open to feedback
    - how often it will be reviewed.
- The framework should be easy to find on the NDIS website. An internal launch of the framework update could help to engage staff on the framework.

Topic 2: Co-design Advisory Group business in 2026

- The group discussed work planning for 2026.
- With an uncertain budget outlook and a current focus on new framework planning roll-out, the NDIA sought ways to engage more effectively and efficiently. The group discussed moving to a quarterly rhythm of meetings (rather than bi-monthly) to align with the DRCO Forum and Quarterly Reform Forum (QRF). Members saw benefits but cautioned against cutting back on engagement to save on costs.
- The group discussed strengthening its terms of reference as an independent oversight body to guide co-design and engagement planning and evaluation. The CAG could strengthen its feedback loops with the DRCO Forum and IAC and connect priorities across forums. The CAG could consider a name change to include ‘engagement’.
- As several IAC memberships were soon expiring, the CAG membership might also change. The CAG should target people with strategic planning and evaluation skills.

Topic 3: Other Business - Home and Living Framework

- Members raised the draft Home and Living Framework that was co-designed in 2022. It was approved by the Board in mid-2025 but was still not available to the public. The group considered writing to the CEO/Board for a status update.
- Members discussed instances where quality co-design work had stalled. Members noted outstanding action from the Clear Horizon report and IAC advice to provide senior decision-makers with co-design training.

Next meeting

The next meeting is to be confirmed.

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