27 August 2026

Key themes and insights

1. NDIA CEO Update

- Key themes:
  - The National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2026 passed Parliament and received Royal Assent on 20 August 2026.
  - The Agency acknowledges that this represents the most significant change to the Scheme since its establishment in 2013.
  - The NDIA has sent out a Stakeholder Communication Toolkit that provides adaptable content, with accurate and up-to-date information about the new laws, their impacts, and when key changes will take effect.
  - A number of key changes have commenced with the update in legislation:
    - Only participants, plan nominees, or child representative can request a plan reassessment before the scheduled reassessment date.
    - Plan reassessments can only be considered if there has been a significant and ongoing change in the participant's functional capacity, support needs, or informal support arrangements.
    - To support payment integrity, new record-keeping requirements require participants to keep records for 3 years, nominees for 5 years, and providers for 7 years.
    - The Minister can now determine NDIS prices and has the power to make a pricing determination. The Agency will continue to provide annual pricing review advice.
  - The NDIA’s Contact Centre is preparing to launch Auslan Connect. This will enable participants to select their preferred language and be the first of its kind within the Australian Government.
  - The Agency has been working with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to develop a NDIS market stewardship framework to clarify government roles, strengthen market oversight, and support shared governance across all jurisdictions.
  - The Agency are working with DHDA and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to deliver the integrated care and commissioning initiative. This involves projects to strengthen the sector, improve service sustainability, and increase access to primary care supports, particularly in regional, remote and First Nations communities.
- Key insights:
  - Members asked how multiple primary disabilities will be considered in the support needs assessment. Members emphasised the importance of ensuring planning decisions capture the full impact of co-occurring impairments.

- Members noted that the community has observed an increase in plan reassessments and plan changes due to the Agency's efforts to address the backlog of plan reassessments. They further noted that this is often misattributed to the Agency pre-empting legislative reforms, contributing to community concern.
- Members suggested greater transparency and requested information they can share to help reduce uncertainty within the community.

2. DRCO ways of working

- Key themes:
  - The NDIA is working to operationalise the new NDIA Engagement Framework, reduce duplication and improve prioritisation, information sharing and collaboration with DRCOs, reference and advisory groups.
  - The NDIA is working with DRCOs to move to a more strategic focus for the DRCO forum, and to share information through other channels. The DRCO forum workplan will direct efforts to providing strategic advice about how the NDIA delivers the NDIS and implements reform. This allows the NDIA and DRCO forum members to spend more timeon strategic discussion and collaborative problem solving.
  - The Forum agreed to test new ways of working based on the principles of early engagement, collaboration, transparency and shared prioritisation, with monthly sessions established to identify emerging themes and agree topics to work on together. The NDIA will use an engagement roadmap to support early planning conversations, define clear opportunities for DRCO influence, and identify shared priorities for engagement.
- Key insights:
  - Members emphasised the importance of timely and transparent feedback loops following consultations, noting that stakeholders want to know how their input has been considered and influenced outcomes.
  - Members highlighted the importance of engaging stakeholders earlier in the design process.
  - Members agreed to try new ways of working, including monthly drop-in sessions to discuss the NDIA’s engagement roadmap, priority topics for engagement, workplans and outcomes.

3. Department of Health Disability and Ageing (DHDA)

- Key themes:
  - James MacIsaac, Specialist Adviser, NDIS Access and Planning, Department of Health Disability and Ageing provided an update on access reforms and the work of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).
  - The TAG is providing expert advice using a three-phase program:

        - Develop an assessment framework and design principles.
        - Provide advice on assessment model options.
        - Provide technical advice to support implementation, testing and validation of the proposed approach.
    - The next meeting of the TAG will continue work already underway on the key principles of the assessment framework f.
    - DHDA is planning on releasing a consultation paper on access reforms and functional capacity to help inform the work of the TAG.
    - Marg Renwick, Director, Strategic Engagement, NDIS Policy & Legislation, Department of Health Disability and Ageing attended to give an update on New Framework Planning.
    - DHDA has opened consultation on the New Planning Framework to gather stakeholder feedback on:
        - Support needs assessment rules.
        - Budget methodology rules.
        - Plan variation and reassessments rules.
        - Updates to the NDIS Supports transitional rule.
- The New Framework Planning consultation has a range of accessible consultation materials available, including Easy Read, Auslan, fact sheets, videos and alternative submission options, to support participation and feedback from people with disability and their representative organisations.

4. New Framework Planning, Testing and Validation

- Key themes:
    - The NDIA is building a new assessor workforce to deliver new framework planning, with more than 370 accredited assessors currently participating in simulation activities to test and refine the future support needs assessment (SNA) processes.
    - A large focus of the testing is verifying that someone’s SNA accurately reflects their support needs. This has involved the current programme of simulated SNAss, as well as around 11,000 desktop assessments to review information on the participant's record about their disability support needs.
    - The findings from the desktop assessments were then reviewed by an experienced internal technical advisor to gather insights into the validity of the assessment and identify what aspects need refining.
    - The NDIA is working with University of Melbourne to undertake long-term studies, learning and gathering of information, and independent reviews to test the validity of assessments to support refining the SNA.
    - The NDIA is working with participants, disability organisations and advisory groups to test and refine the participant experience of the SNA, with a focus on accessibility, effective communication and continuous improvement.

    - The NDIA is building a highly skilled and accredited assessor workforce through structured training, accreditation and ongoing quality assurance activities. DRCOs will be consulted separately on the establishment of a training academy for assessors.
- Key insights:
    - Members emphasised the importance of validating assessment outcomes with participants during testing, noting that support needs assessment accuracy is fundamental to ensuring participant safety and appropriate support budgets under new framework planning.
    - Members expressed the importance of participant involvement in validating assessment outcomes, particularly for complex or targeted assessments, to ensure findings accurately reflect individual circumstances and support needs.

Attendees

Australian Autism Alliance, Australian Consumers & Carers Mental Health Forum, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Autistic Self Advocacy Network of Australia and New Zealand, Blind Citizens Australia, Carers Australia, Children and Young People with Disability Australia, Community Mental Health Australia, Deaf Australia, Deafblind Australia, Deafness Forum Australia, Disability Advocacy Network Australia, Down Syndrome Australia, Every Australian Counts, First Peoples Disability Network, Inclusion Australia, JFA Purple Orange, Mental Health Carers Australia, National Mental Health Consumer Alliance, National Ethnic Disability Alliance, People with Disability Australia, Physical Disability Australia, Rare Voices Australia, Reimagine Australia, Women with Disabilities Australia, Young People in Nursing Homes National Alliance, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, Reform Advisory Committee Co-Chairs.

Apologies:

Brain Injury Australia

Related articles

Category

- News

Disability Representative and Carers Organisation (DRCO) Forum summary 28 May 2026

Date

28 May 2026

Category

- News

Quarterly Reform Forum meeting summary May 2026

Date

29 May 2026

Quarterly Reform Forum meeting summary February 2026

Date

19 February 2026

Read more news