6 October 2026

The Rural and Remote Advisory Group (RRAG) met on Tuesday, 6 October 2026. The meeting was held online.

Focus of the meeting

The focus of the October meeting was:

- NDIA update.
- Support Needs Assessment and Support Needs Assessor Academy.
- Support Coordination and Connection.

NDIA update

Securing the NDIS for future generations Bill and the new way of planning

- The Australian Government passed new legislation on 19 August 2026.
- This means there will be changes to the NDIS over the next 12 months. This includes:
  - Participants can continue to use their current plan and supports until they move to a new plan or have a plan reassessment.
  - Changes to how some funding is included in a plan.
  - Changes to how participants can spend their funding.
  - Important disability supports and some support categories will not change.
  - Only participants, plan nominees and child representatives will be able to request a plan reassessment.
- The NDIA has created a new process to support participants who need disability supports 24 hours a day.
- Further information can be found here:
  - Changes to support budgets from 1 October
  - What is a plan variation
  - National Disability Insurance Scheme (Support) Determination 2026 - Federal Register of Legislation
  - National Disability Insurance Scheme (High Support Needs Participants) Determination 2026 - Federal Register of Legislation
  - Funding changes for NDIS supports – Safeguards for high support needs participants

Annual Pricing Review

Consultation for the 2027-28 Annual Pricing Review closed 2 November 2026.

The NDIA sought feedback from participants, families, carers, advocacy organisations, providers and peak bodies.

To find out what the NDIA was told in previous consultations, read the Annual Pricing Review for 2026-27 Prices What We Heard report .

Funding periods

- From 1 December 2026, claims must be submitted within 90 days after the support is delivered.
- Participants may still be able to claim supports from a different funding period if there is enough funding available in their plan.
    - Participants and providers may agree to claim a support from a later funding period.

First Nations Strategy update

- The NDIA has finished consultation for the First Nations Strategy.
- The NDIA spoke to First Nations people across Australia.
- Key themes included:
    - Governance.
    - Cultural safety.
    - Workforce capability.
    - Communications.
    - Support to help people navigate the NDIS.
- The NDIA, states and territory governments, and Department of Health, Disability and Ageing will use the feedback to develop actions for the First Nations Strategy.

Member feedback included:

- Service providers must have cultural safety training.
- Improve cultural safety to support participant choice and control.

Support needs assessments and Support Needs Assessor Academy

The NDIA gave an update on support needs assessment (SNA) testing and asked for feedback on the Support

- Needs Assessor Academy (SNA Academy).

- The NDIA has completed more than 3,000 SNA tests.
- The NDIA is still testing how assessment results could help decide a participant's budget.
- The NDIA is working with the University of Melbourne to check that SNA reports are accurate and consistent.
- All staff who conduct an SNA have allied health backgrounds.
- The NDIA is creating the SNA Academy. The Academy will train and accredit the staff who will run the SNAs.
- The Academy will focus on:
    - Disability knowledge.
    - Interviewing skills.
    - Trauma informed practice.
    - Cultural safety.
    - Communication skills.
- The NDIA plans to start training assessors in 2027.

Member feedback included:

- Discuss assessment results with participants before making decisions about plans and budgets.
- Provide more information about where assessments will take place and how assessors will be matched to participants.
- Make sure assessors understand local communities, culture, language and family circumstances in rural and remote communities.
- Create a pathway for local people, including Remote Community Connectors, to become assessors.
- Match participants with assessors who have the rights skills and experience.

Support Coordination and Connection

The NDIA and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA) gave a presentation on the new Support Coordination and Connection service.

Key updates included:

- The Support Coordination and Connection service (SCC) will replace the current support coordination model from 1 July 2028.
- The new model aims to improve quality, safeguards and participant outcomes.
- The NDIA plans to contract providers to deliver SCC services to eligible participants in a local area.
- Support coordination funding will no longer be included directly in participant plans.
- SCC providers will work with participants to understand their goals and connect them with the right services.

- The future model will include Support Coordination Plus for participants with more complex support needs.
- The NDIA is planning how participants, providers and communities will move to the new model, including in rural and remote areas.

Member feedback included:

- Explain how participants will get support if they cannot access the new SCC service.
- Make it easier for participants to access funded supports by removing unnecessary steps. For example, remove the need for a community connections plan.
- Design the new SCC service to work for rural and remote communities. Support roles in these areas often overlap and supports are already limited.
- Allow flexibility in rural and remote areas with limited services. This will help participants continue to access the support they need.
- Make sure SCC workers understand local communities, culture and languages.
- Think about the needs of participants who may not have family, community or informal supports.
- Offer a choice of SCC providers in each area wherever possible.

Next meeting

The next RRAG meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 1 December 2026.

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