18 July 2023

Introduction

What is a communique?

A communique is an official and public announcement to provide information.

What is the purpose of this communique?

The purpose of this communique is to share a summary of the out-of-session First Nations Advisory Council meeting, which took place virtually on Tuesday 6 June 2023.

What is the First Nations Advisory Council?

The First Nations Advisory Council is co-chaired by Damian Griffis, CEO of First Peoples Disability Network, (FPDN) and Rebecca Falkingham, CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

The First Nations Advisory Council brings together First Nations people with lived experience of disability with First Nations and First Nations disability sector representatives.

The purpose of the First Nations Advisory Council is to provide advice to the NDIA to guide initiatives that will improve outcomes for First Nations people with disability.

The First Nations Advisory Council will meet regularly to inform and guide:

- the co-design of the First Nations Strategy and action plan
- short-term opportunities to support First Nations people with disability and
- other relevant NDIA or FPDN projects as needed.

Meeting summary

The meeting was held virtually and the co-chairs acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the various lands from which members were dialing in, paying respect to their Elders, past and present.

The out-of-session meeting focused on First Nations Advisory Council members discussing and self-determining:

- principles for the First Nations Advisory Council

- ways of working for the First Nations Advisory Council
- principles for public engagement to co-design the First Nations Strategy.

Principles for the First Nations Advisory Council

Members raised the importance of self-determination and what success looks like for the First Nations Advisory Council.

Attendees discussed principles for the First Nations Advisory Council including, but not limited, to:

- valuing the diversity, cultures and intersectionality of all First Nations peoples
- embedding culturally sensitive and trauma-informed ways of working
- elevating the voices of Elders, young people and future generations
- empowering family-centered ways of living and working
- moving away from deficit language and models of disability to describe First Nations people with disability
- building respectful relationships across sectors
- addressing power imbalances between government and First Nations communities.

Ways of working for the First Nations Advisory Council

First Nations Advisory Council members discussed how they can work together in culturally safe and accessible ways.

The First Nations Advisory Council will meet on Country and in culturally inclusive venues on different lands across Australia.

There will be time for members to connect with each other informally before, during and after each meeting.

The First Nations Advisory Council also aim to meet with the NDIA Board, so that the Board can hear directly from the First Nations Advisory Council.

First Nations Advisory Council members agreed that members who identify as First Nations should participate in caucus meetings.

These meetings will support members to hold independent, community-led conversations to self-determine what should be raised at official, in-person meetings.

Principles of public engagement

First Nations Advisory Council members discussed principles for engaging with broader First Nations communities to co-design the First Nations Strategy, including but not limited to:

- having First Nations facilitators work with leaders from each First Nations community to speak to each community in the right way
- building trust with First Nations Elders and communities, to be invited to meet First Nations peoples where they are at on Country
- communicating in accessible ways
- listening to First Nations communities with openness and respect.

Future opportunities

First Nations Advisory Council members shared personal stories, which may inform future opportunities for the First Nations Advisory Council to improve how the NDIS supports First Nations people with disability.

The First Nations Advisory Council may provide advice to guide how the NDIA should:

- re-design NDIS assessment and planning processes to make them culturally appropriate and place-based
- address financial barriers that prevent First Nations people with disability from accessing services
- connect First Nations people with disability in with trusted service staff that either identify as First Nations or as part of their communities.

Closing and next steps

Outcomes from the out-of-session meeting will inform a draft Terms of Reference for the First Nations Advisory Council and a draft stakeholder engagement and co-design approach for the First Nations Strategy. Both documents will be discussed at the next First Nations Advisory Council meeting.

The next two-day meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday 25 July and Wednesday 26 July 2023 in Gadigal Country (Sydney). A caucus meeting will be held with the First Nations Advisory Council prior to this meeting.

The NDIA is committed to providing accessible information about meetings to the First Nations Advisory Council.

If you have any feedback or questions about the First Nations Advisory Council, please email:

- The NDIA at firstnationsstrategy@ndis.gov.au or

- FPDN at fnac@fpdn.org.au.

Attendee list

The following co-chairs and members were in attendance.
Co-chairs

- Damian Griffis, CEO, FPDN
- Rebecca Falkingham, CEO, NDIA

Members

- Tess Moodie, Multiple Organisations / Independent Consultant, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Victor Djungadi Patrick, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Suzy Trindall, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Justen Thomas, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Jennifer Cullen, Equity and Inclusion Reference Group Co-chair, Independent Advisory Council (IAC)
- Liz Reid, Member, IAC
- Dr Scott Avery, Senior Lecturer, Western Sydney University
- Donna Murray, CEO, Indigenous Allied Health of Australia
- Jodi Cassar, Branch Manager (Australia's Disability Strategy), Department of Social Services
- Munatji McKenzie, Disability Royal Commission Project Officer, NPY Women's Council
- Jody Broun, CEO, National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Thea Dunkley (Proxy), NDIS Manager, National Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

Apologies

- June Riemer, Deputy CEO, FPDN
- Gi Brown, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Joanna Agius, Deadly Deaf Mob, Lived Experience Representative / Advocate
- Catherine Liddle, CEO, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
- Ellyse Paton, Senior Policy Advisor (First Nations Policy), Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

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