8 August 2023

The primary purpose of the Co-design Advisory Group is for the Independent Advisory Council (IAC), Department of Social Services (DSS) and the disability sector to provide strategic advice to the NDIA on the development, focus and implementation of co-design and engagement processes within the disability community.

The Co-design Advisory Group works collaboratively to:

- ensure disability community perspectives on issues facing the NDIS are represented
- gather feedback on the co-design priorities and approaches with peers and members, and
- provide and receive strategic advice on the design, implementation and evaluation of co-design and engagement.

The following members and NDIA representatives were in attendance.

Chairperson

- Skye Kakoschke-Moore, CEO, Children and Young People with Disability Australia

Members

- Leah Van Poppel, IAC Principal Member
- Ross Joyce, CEO, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- Dwayne Cranfield, CEO, National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- Catherine McAlpine, CEO Inclusion Australia
- Jennifer Cullen, IAC
- Nerissa Stewart, DSS

NDIA representatives

- Aaron Verlin, General Manager, Co-design and Engagement
- Alex Rosenthal, A/g Branch Manager, Co-design and Engagement
- Donna Purcell, NDIA Participant Advocate
- Samantha Taylor, General Manager, Policy Advice and Research

Secretariat

- Matthew Wright, Director, Sector Engagement and Advice

- Courtney Hofmann, Director, Strategy, Communications and Innovation
- Helen Penisini, Engagement Officer, Sector Engagement and Advice

Apologies

- Julie Yeend, DSS
- Corri McKenzie, Deputy CEO, Service Design and Improvement

Meeting summary

The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land, paying respect to their Elders, past and present, and also paid respects to people with disability. Co-design Advisory Group (CAG) members each paid respect to the Traditional Owners of the land from which they were joining the meeting.

The Chair acknowledged two IAC representatives are still to be appointed to the CAG following the 2023 IAC membership renewal process.

The Chair welcomed Aaron Verlin, NDIA General Manager, Co-design and Engagement Division, to his first CAG meeting.

Future of the Co-design Advisory Group

Alex Rosenthal, A/g Branch Manager, Co-design and Engagement, discussed the Options Paper outlining two potential ways forward for the CAG.

The options identified include:

- Incorporate the responsibilities of CAG into the Reform for Outcomes (RFO) program steering committee.
- Maintain the two groups, ensuring no duplication of responsibility between the groups in their updated Terms of Reference.

Ms Rosenthal reiterated these options are non-exclusive and other options can be tabled.

Feedback

CAG members identified a gap in the current meeting structure as there is no current opportunity for Disability Representative and Carer Organisations (DRCOs) to meet to discuss and contribute to all RFO working groups.

CAG members identified that there are several factors that may influence the role of the Co-design Advisory Group moving forward, including the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, the outcome of the NDIS Review, the status of the RFO co-design initiatives and progress related to the co-design evaluation processes.

Discussion outcome

CAG members discussed cancelling the October meeting, and reconvening on 14 November 2023 once the impact of influencing factors are better understood.

Ms Rosenthal committed to progress conversations about appropriately resourcing DRCOs to meet separately to the NDIA to share information about ongoing co-design projects through the DRCO Forum

Co-design evaluation proposal

The Chair introduced Aaron Verlin, General Manager, Co-design and Engagement to provide a recap of the proposed options for co-design evaluation, and the opportunity for the CAG to be involved in the procurement evaluation.

The proposed evaluation approaches include:

- a retrospective evaluation of the Agency's approach to co-design to be undertaken by an external supplier identified through a targeted procurement process
- the formation of a developmental evaluation approach to be embedded into the RFO co-design projects.

CAG has an opportunity be involved in the evaluation of the submissions received from the approach to market to identify a supplier to deliver the retrospective co-design evaluation. This includes the CAG being set up as procurement advisors, with all probity requirements being met beforehand. CAG would be able to review the initial evaluation assessment on submissions conducted by the Agency and express their feedback for consideration.

Andrew Goodall, Director Strategic Evaluation, and Elliott Tester, Assistant Director Strategic Evaluation, discussed the two co-design evaluation approaches, with a focus on developmental evaluation.

CAG members agreed to the updates to the key evaluation questions, with one further request to include a question regarding the ability to compare and contrast co-design models specifically in relation to the retrospective evaluation.

Mr Goodall welcomed input from CAG members in the identification of suppliers to target for the retrospective evaluation procurement. Mr Goodall advised that this evaluation would take approximately four months, recognising the need for a short pause around Christmas/New Year, with the possibility of a short extension. The importance of collecting data from people with a disability in a range of accessible formats to support inclusive NDIA evaluation processes was also noted.

Mr Tester discussed the developmental evaluation as highly collaborative, with varied options of evaluation methods that could be implemented. Mr Tester confirmed that the Research and Evaluation Branch, an Evaluation Reference Group and the RFO co-design project groups themselves will have roles and responsibilities in progressing the developmental approach. Mr Tester sought feedback in relation to the composition of the Evaluation Reference Group and received support regarding the inclusion of some CAG members.

Feedback

CAG members agreed to the two proposed evaluation approaches as identified by Mr Verlin.

CAG members agreed with the probity requirements regarding involvement in the co-design procurement evaluation as advisors and acknowledged the Agency would remain delegates of the process. CAG members confirmed no organisations they may individually represent would submit a tender application for this evaluation procurement activity.

Members discussed ensuring both co-design evaluation approaches are made fully inclusive and accessible, with specific considerations relating to including people with complex support needs, First Nations people and people living in remote and very remote areas.

Discussion outcome

Mr Verlin confirmed the CAG would be provided the draft scope of the procurement evaluation, and further detail would be provided on the specific nature of involvement the CAG can have as advisors in the process.

Meeting close

The meeting concluded.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 14 November 2023.

If you have any feedback or questions about the Co-design Advisory Group, please email stakeholder.engagement@ndis.gov.au.

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