

First Nations Reference Group

Easy Read meeting bulletin

11–12 June 2025



Acknowledgement of Country



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples of Australia.

We also use the words First Nations people.



First Nations people have always looked after **Country**.

Country means the land, water, sky and everything within them.

We respect the important connection that First Nations people have with Country.



And we respect their Elders from the past and now.

A warning about this bulletin



In this bulletin, we talk about First Nations people who passed away.

You can talk to someone you trust if you:



- need support to read this document



- don't feel comfortable to read this document.

How to use this bulletin



We are the Independent Advisory Council (IAC).

We give advice about ways to make the NDIS better.



We wrote this **bulletin**.

A bulletin is an important news item we share with the community.

It explains what we did in our meeting.



We wrote some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is also a list of these words on page 28.



You can ask someone you trust for support to:

- read this bulletin
- find more information.



This is an Easy Read summary of another bulletin.

It only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other bulletin on our website.

www.ndis-iac.com.au/meetings

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About this Reference Group



A **Reference Group** is a group of people who give us advice about a certain topic.

This Reference Group shares their ideas with the IAC about how to support First Nations:



- communities



- **participants.**



Participants are people with disability who take part in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The Reference Group's ideas are about support for First Nations participants to:



- live how they choose



- take part in the community

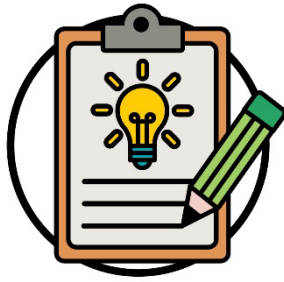


- use supports and services that are **culturally safe.**



When something is culturally safe, people feel:

- respected and heard
- safe to be who they are.



The IAC use these ideas when they write their advice for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Board.

We just call them the **NDIA Board**.



The NDIA Board is a group of people who make decisions about all parts of the NDIA.

Our reports



Reference Group members connected with their communities to find out about issues that affect them.



Members shared reports about these issues with the NDIA.

What did the reports talk about?

First Nations people and the police



Reference Group members talked about First Nations people with disability who passed away recently.



These people passed away after they were arrested by the police.



Members said the police use **violence** against First Nations people when they don't need to.



Violence is when someone:

- hurts you
- scares you
- controls you.



Members also said that people in First Nations communities don't trust the police.

Foundational supports



Foundational supports are disability supports for all people with disability.



This includes people with disability who don't take part in the NDIS.



Reference Group members said people are confused about how foundational supports will work.

Checking if participants still need the NDIS



Reference Group members said some First Nations participants are getting letters from the NDIA.



These letters tell participants that the NDIA wants to check if they can still get support from the NDIS.



Members feel that First Nations participants don't get enough support to understand these letters.

This includes support from:



- **local area coordinators** – someone who helps you find and use supports and services



- **plan managers** – someone who can manage the money you get for your NDIS supports



- First Nations organisations.

Members are also worried that these organisations:



- don't know how these letters affect First Nations participants



- don't tell the NDIA what the community thinks about these letters.

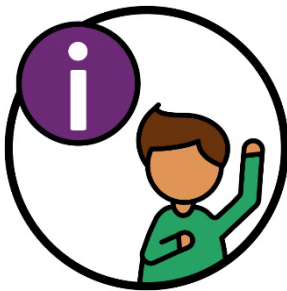


Members said it can be hard for participants to collect information about why they need NDIS support.

For example, some participants have to wait **3 years** to:



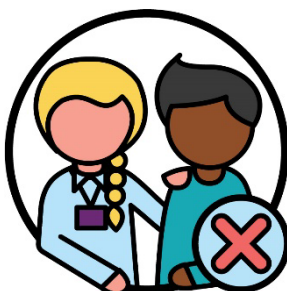
- see the right health service



- get the information they need.



This can also be harder for participants who live far away from cities and towns.



Members said this might mean some participants can't get the support they need anymore.

Finding and using services



Reference Group members said there aren't enough First Nations people who work in health services.

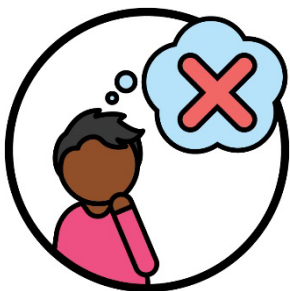


Members also said that many **providers** are part of religious organisations.

For example, they might be part of a church.



Providers support people with disability by delivering a service.



First Nations participants can feel uncomfortable about using these providers.



Members also said there aren't enough **therapists** in places far away from cities and towns.



Therapists use different types of support to help improve how:

- you think and feel
- your body moves.

This means participants might have to:

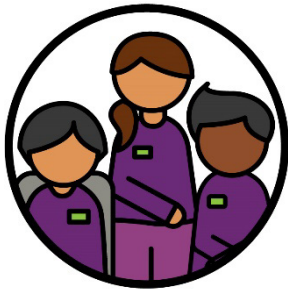


- travel a long way to get these supports



- use their NDIS supports to pay for travel.

First Nations workers at the NDIA



The NDIA shared that **234 First Nations people** work for them.



The NDIA's goal is for **5%** of their staff to be First Nations people.

This means they are nearly at their goal.

Support to hear from more people



Reference Group members asked for support to hear from more people in the community.



They said it is hard to let people know about what the NDIS can do for them.

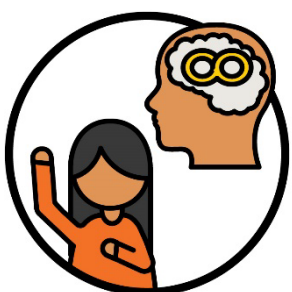
Gimuy First Nations community



Reference Group members met with people from the Gimuy First Nations community in Cairns.



People from the community shared some of their experiences about the NDIS.



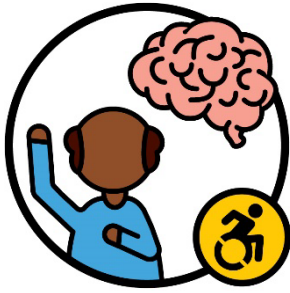
They said there are many Autistic people in their community.

Autistic people are people with **Autism**.

Autism can affect how you:



- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect with others.



There are also many people in the community with **intellectual disability**.

An intellectual disability affects how you:



- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



And there are many people in the community with **developmental delay**.

A developmental delay is when a child takes longer than usual to learn things like walking and talking.



Some people from the community want a group to speak up for First Nations people with disability in North Queensland.



Reference Group members told the community that they:

- understand these issues
- will share them with the NDIA.

The NDIA's First Nations Group

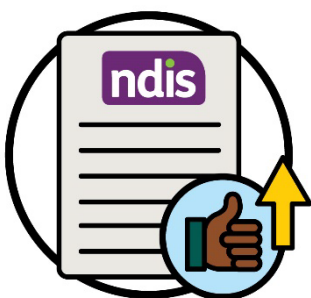


The NDIA works with a group of First Nations people.
They call them the First Nations Group.



The First Nations Group shared information about
the work they are doing.

They are:



- working with First Nations people with disability to make the NDIS better



- helping the NDIA get more First Nations providers to join the NDIS.

The First Nations Group is also helping the NDIA:



- hire more First Nations people



- make sure changes to the NDIS are culturally safe.

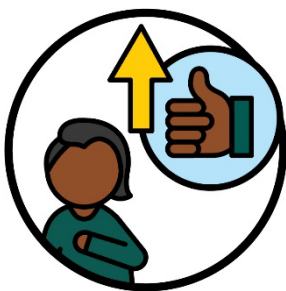
The First Nations Group is also creating a new way for First Nations people to:



- learn about the NDIS



- become a participant



- use the NDIS to improve their lives.

Support for people far away from cities and towns



The NDIA gave an update on their work to support participants far away from cities and towns.



The NDIA said they will have workers who focus on supporting a certain community.



They will make sure these workers understand what their community needs.

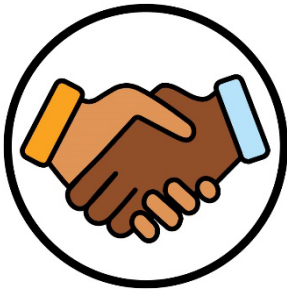


Reference Group members asked how the NDIA will connect different First Nations communities.

The NDIA said their plan will connect communities that:



- are close to each other



- will work well together.

Our next meeting



Our next meeting is on **28 August 2025**.



You can find out more about our meetings and bulletins on our website.

www.ndis-iac.com.au/meetings

More information

For more information about this bulletin, please contact us.



You can visit our website.

www.ndis-iac.com.au



You can send us an email.

advisorycouncil@ndis.gov.au



You can learn more about the NDIS on their website.

www.ndis.gov.au



You can call the NDIS.

1800 800 110

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Autism

Autism can affect how you:

- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect with others.



Culturally safe

When something is culturally safe, people feel:

- respected and heard
- safe to be who they are.



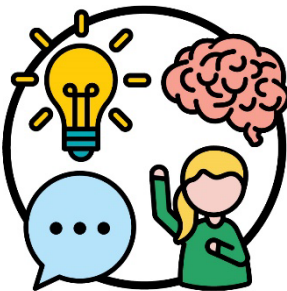
Developmental delay

A developmental delay is when a child takes longer than usual to learn things like walking and talking.



Foundational supports

Foundational supports are disability supports for all people with disability.



Intellectual disability

An intellectual disability affects how you:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



Local area coordinator

A local area coordinator is someone who helps you find and use supports and services.



NDIA Board

The NDIA Board is a group of people who make decisions about all parts of the NDIA.



Participant

A participant is someone with disability who takes part in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



Plan manager

A plan manager is someone who can manage the money you get for your NDIS supports.



Provider

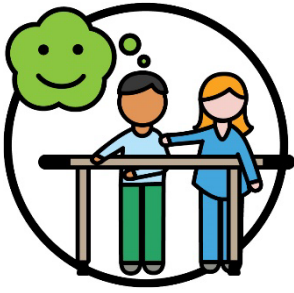
Providers support people with disability by delivering a service.



Reference group

A Reference Group is a group of people who give us advice about a certain topic.

Therapist



A therapist uses different types of support to help improve how:

- you think and feel
- your body moves.

Violence



Violence is when someone:

- hurts you
- scares you
- controls you.



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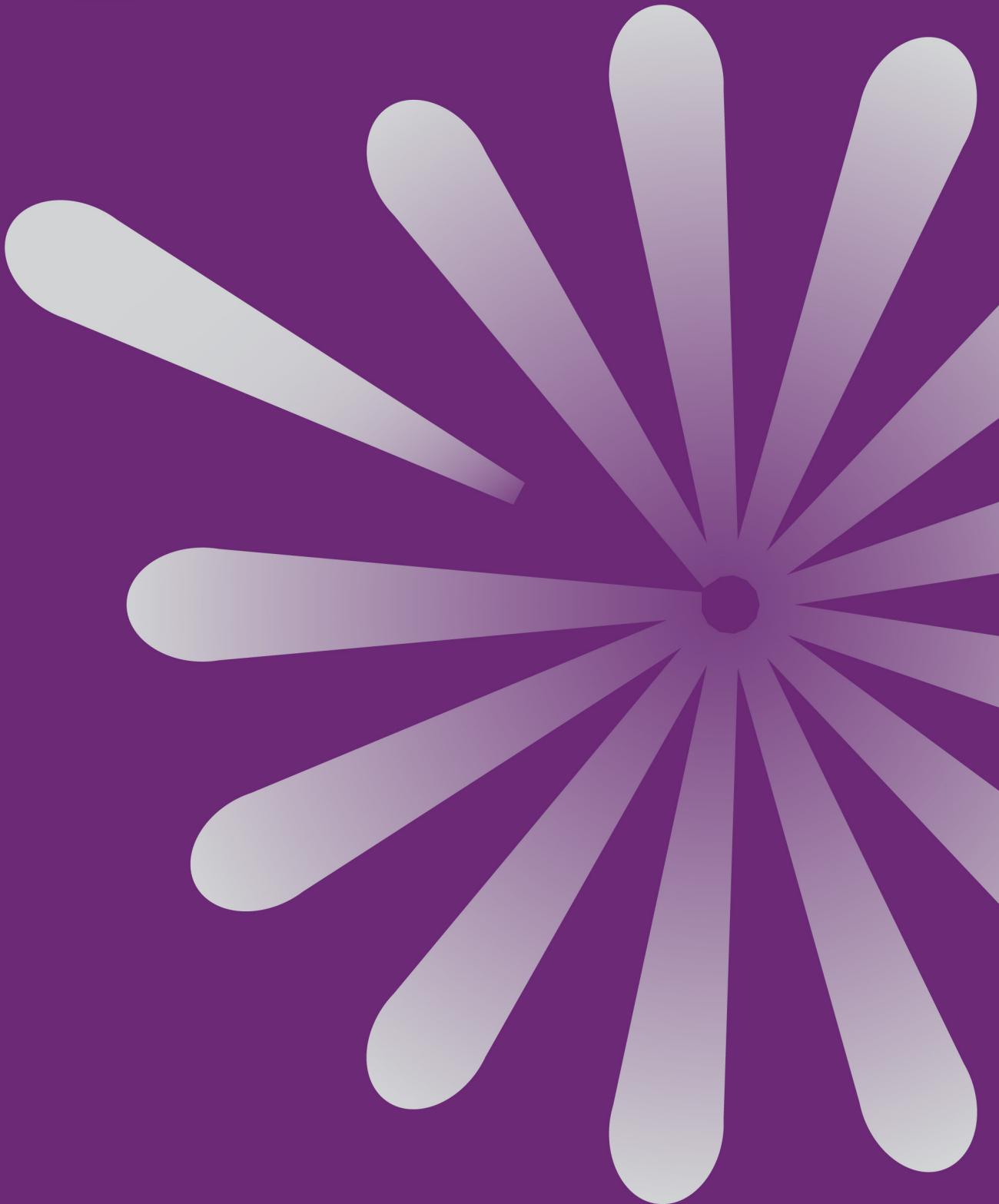
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**Independent
Advisory
Council**
to the **ndis**



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