

First Nations Reference Group

Easy Read meeting bulletin

20–21 February 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.

How to use this bulletin



We are the Independent Advisory Council (IAC).

We give advice about ways to make the NDIS better.



We wrote some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is also a list of these words on page 26.



We wrote this **bulletin**.

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

It explains what we did in our meeting.



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.

The 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 government



When more First Nations people are part of the government, they have a say in important decisions.



It also helps the government understand what different First Nations communities need.



Reference Group members said that more First Nations people need to be part of state and territory governments.

This includes:



- First Nations women



- young First Nations people



- First Nations people from different places in Australia



- **non-binary** First Nations people.

When a person is non-binary, they feel like they don't fit the idea of being a woman or a man.

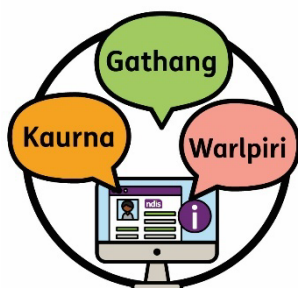
Ways to improve the NDIS



Reference Group members shared that 'disability' means different things to different First Nations communities.



Members said the NDIA and Reference Group should think about this at meetings.

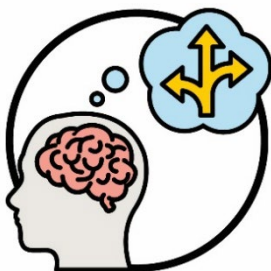


Members said the NDIS portal should have information and advice in different languages.

Members shared that the NDIA needs to do more to understand the needs of:



- older people



- **neurodiverse** people.

When people are neurodiverse, their brains work in different ways.



Members also want the NDIA to better understand what people from the **LGBTQIASB+** community need.



The letters LGBTQIASB stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning, asexual, sistergirl and brotherboy.



The ‘+’ is for people who are part of the LGBTIQASB+ community but don’t talk about themselves using a word from this list.



Members said NDIA workers need training about how to work with people from different cultures.



This can help the NDIA provide better support to First Nations communities in places far away from cities and towns.

Culturally safe supports and services



Reference Group members said it's important that NDIA workers know how to make supports and services culturally safe.

This includes:



- **support coordinators** – someone who helps you plan and use your supports



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



Members said that some areas in Australia don't have a lot of culturally safe supports and services.



This means some family members need to provide support to participants.



Members said the NDIA should support family members who need to support people with disability.

Issues for people who live in places far away from cities and towns



Reference Group members talked about issues for people who live in places far away from cities and towns.



This includes issues for children who need a **diagnosis**.



A diagnosis is when a doctor:

- checks your health
- says what condition they think you have.



Members said can be hard for some First Nations families to find and use healthcare services in places far away from cities and towns.

Members shared that healthcare services should:



- hire more workers



- support their workers to stay in a job for a long time.



This could help more First Nations people to find and use healthcare services.



Members said that people who live in places far away from cities and towns need more information in different languages.

Members said First Nations organisations should meet each year to talk about:



- what works well in their communities



- what doesn't work well.



For example, making sure communities far away from cities and towns:

- have services that are easy to find and use
- are easy to move around.

NDIA's work to support First Nations people



The NDIA's Deputy CEOs met with the Reference Group members.

Deputy CEOs lead different parts of the NDIA.



The Deputy CEOs said that First Nations communities use NDIS services less than other people.



They talked about ideas from the **Disability Royal Commission** to make the NDIS better.



The Disability Royal Commission group looked into problems that people with disability experienced.

It helped the Australian Government find out:

- what went wrong
- what we need to improve.



19 of the Disability Royal Commission's ideas were about the NDIS.



4 of these ideas could improve the NDIS a lot for First Nations people with disability.



Janine Mohamed is the NDIA's Deputy CEO of First Nations Groups.

She is a Narrunga Kurna woman.



Janine said that culturally safe supports and services are very important.



She said the NDIA wants to hire more First Nations **NDIS planners**.



An NDIS planner is someone who helps people create and update their **NDIS plan**.



An NDIS plan has information about:

- a participant and their goals
- what supports they need
- what the NDIS will pay for.



The NDIA is also working to create a First Nations call centre.

NDIS First Nations Strategy 2025–2030



People from the NDIA shared information about the First Nations **Strategy**.

A strategy is a plan for how do things in the future.



The First Nations Strategy will guide how the NDIA changes to meet the needs of First Nations people with disability.

It has 4 areas that will work to:



- improve how the NDIS supports First Nations people with disability



- make sure the goals of First Nations people with disability are met.

The NDIA will include First Nations people in their work to create a plan about how to:



- start using the strategy



- make sure the strategy works well.

Our next meeting



Our next meeting is on **12 June 2025**.



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

www.ndis-iac.com.au/meetings

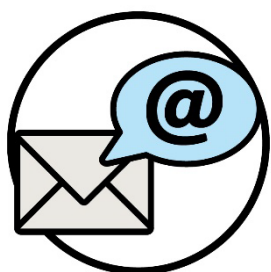
More information

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 bulletin mean.



Bulletin

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

It explains what we did in our last meeting.



Country

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



Culturally safe

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



Diagnosis

A diagnosis is when a doctor:

- checks your health
- says what condition they think you have.



Disability Royal Commission

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- what we need to improve.



LGBTIQASB+

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NDIA Board

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NDIS plan

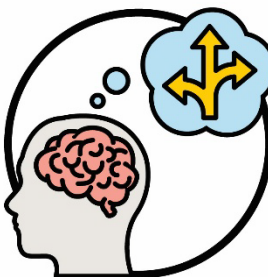
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- a participant and their goals
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Neurodiverse

When people are neurodiverse, their brains work in different ways.



Non-binary

When a person is non-binary, they feel like they don't fit the idea of being a woman or a man.



Participants

Participants are people with disability who take part in the NDIS.



Plan manager

A plan manager is someone who can manage the money you get from the NDIS.



Reference Group

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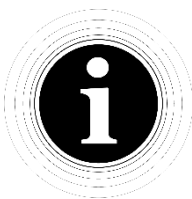
Strategy

A strategy is a plan for how do things in the future.



Support coordinators

A support coordinator is someone who helps you plan and use your supports

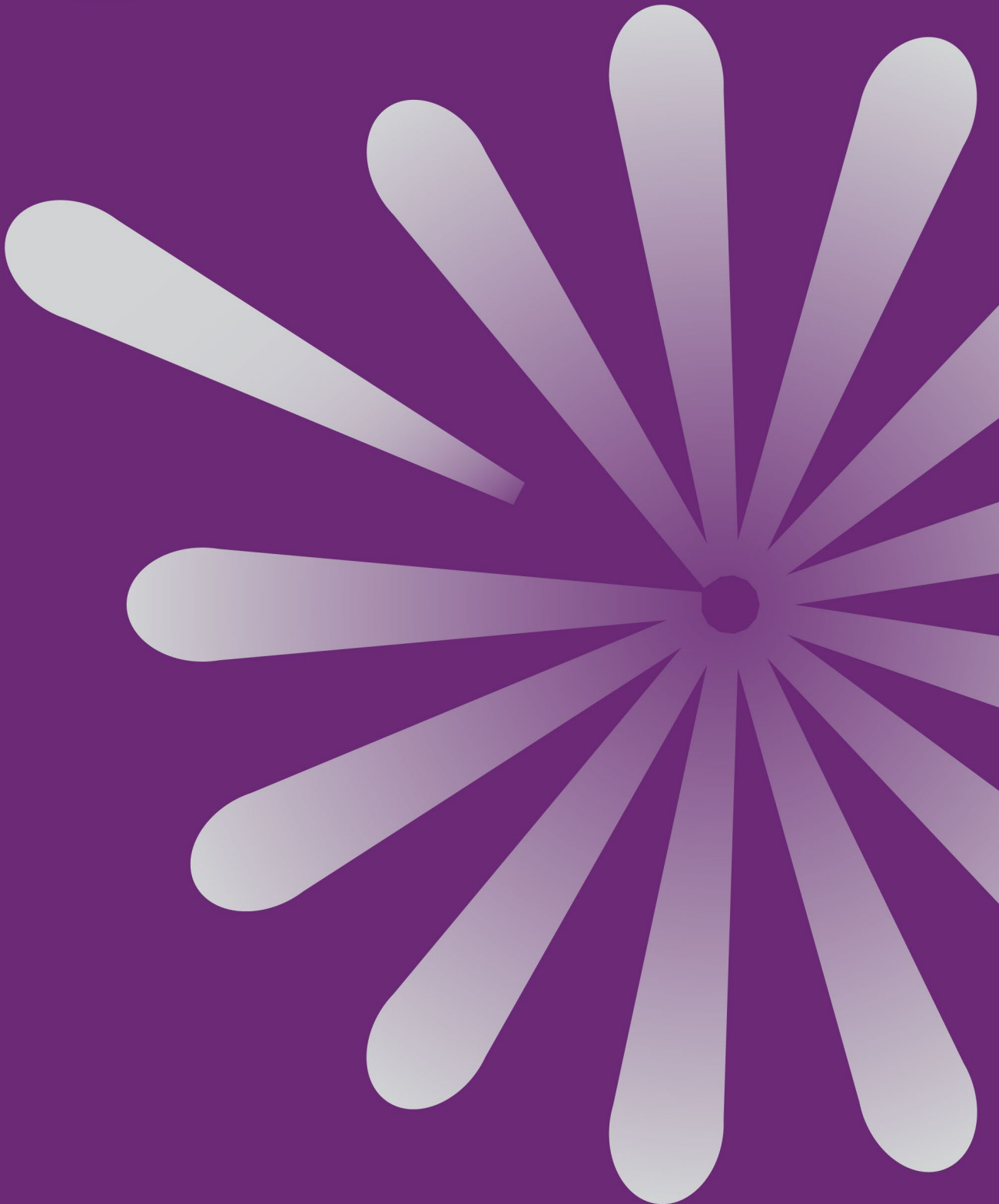


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**Independent
Advisory
Council**
to the **ndis**



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