

# First Nations Reference Group

Easy Read meeting bulletin

26–27 November 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 National Disability Insurance Scheme (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.



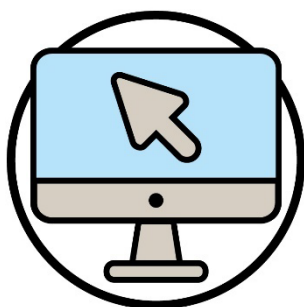
You can ask someone you trust for support to:

- 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](http://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 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.



## What issues did the community share?



Reference Group members connected with the community to find out about issues that affect them.



This includes issues that affect participants.

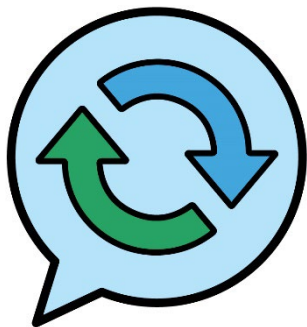


Members shared reports about these issues with the NDIA.



People from the NDIA also shared their response to some of these issues.

## Changes to short-term respite services



Reference Group members talked about the NDIA's changes to **short-term respite** services.



Short-term respite services look after people with disability for a short amount of time.

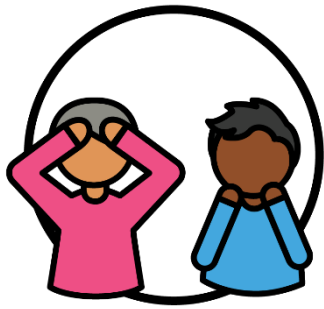
This is so carers can have a break.



Members said respite services can help First Nations participants connect to their families.



This includes First Nations participants and families who live in different areas.



But the changes to short-term respite will mean families have to spend time apart.

This has made First Nations participants and families feel stressed.



Members asked the NDIA to create **NDIS plans** that support participants to have a good life.



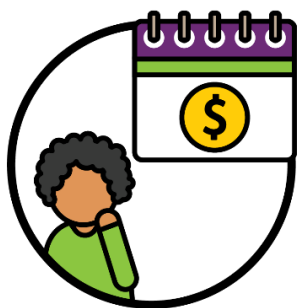
An NDIS plan has information about:

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



For example, NDIS plans that better include short-term respite services.

## Funding periods and NDIS plans



Reference Group members said that people are worried about **funding periods**.



Funding periods tell a participant:

- how long their **funding** needs to last
- when they can start using more funding.



Funding is money from an NDIS plan that pays for the supports a participant needs.



Members said participants need to be able to use their NDIS plans and funding in different ways.



A 3-month funding period means participants can only use a small amount of funding.



This doesn't give participants much choice about how they use their funding.



For example, a participant might not be able to use a service if they don't have enough money in their funding period.



Members also said the NDIA has changed the way some participants manage their NDIS plan.



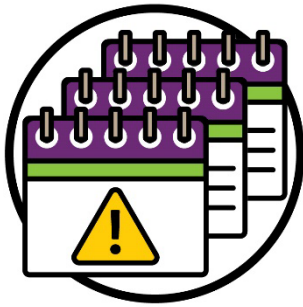
For example, some participants used to manage their NDIS plan on their own.

But now the NDIA manages their NDIS plan for them.



Participants are feeling stressed because they don't know why this has changed.

## Issues with NDIS services and providers



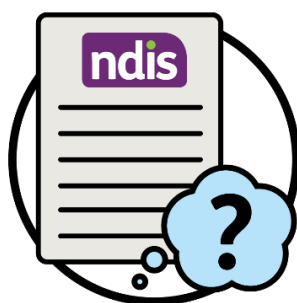
Reference Group members said First Nations communities have to wait a long time for some NDIS services.



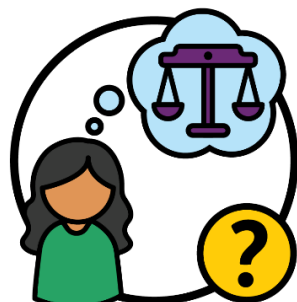
Some First Nations people also feel like **providers** make participants pay too much for a service.



Providers support people with disability by delivering a service.



Members think this happens because some First Nations people don't know a lot about the NDIS.



This can make it harder for First Nations people to know if a provider is being fair.

## NDIS portal



Reference Group members said people are worried about the NDIS portal.



People want to know if the NDIS portal records changes to someone's personal information.



For example, information about where someone lives.

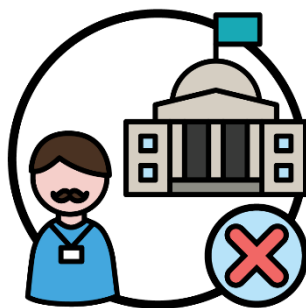


Members want the NDIA to be more culturally safe when it records this information.

## Providers leaving the NDIS



Reference Group members said people are worried about some providers leaving the NDIS.



This includes providers who don't work for the government.



Some of these providers are leaving when they can't afford to deliver their services.



This is because they're not getting paid enough money from the NDIS.





These providers have asked the NDIA to improve the way they make decisions about funding.



This would make sure providers get paid enough money to deliver their services.

## Wait times for the NDIA



Reference Group members said wait times for the NDIA's call centre have gotten better.



Participants are happy that the NDIA has worked to improve this.

# Updates from the NDIS Commission



The **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission** makes sure participants:

- are safe
- get good services.



We just call them the NDIS Commission.



The NDIS Commission gave an update on its **NDIS worker screening check**.



The NDIS worker screening check finds out if a person is safe to work with participants.

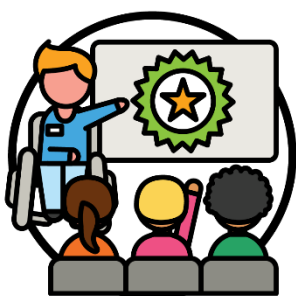


The NDIS Commission also gave an update on its work with First Nations people.

## Update from CDAH



Reference Group members met with Community and Disability Alliance Hunter (CDAH).



CDAH is an organisation that supports people with disability to build their skills.

It's run by people with disability.



CDAH talked to members about what's important to them.

This includes:



- choice and control for people with disability



- people with disability connecting with their community.

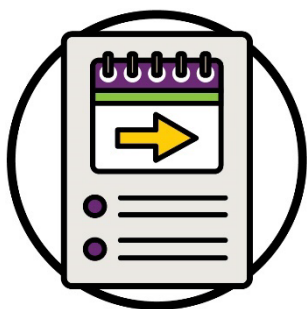
## Update from the NDIA



The NDIA's First Nations Group gave an update on their work.



They told Reference Group members about their work on the NDIA's First Nations **Strategy**.



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



The strategy explains how the NDIA will improve the NDIS for First Nations people with disability.

## Update from the IAC



The IAC gave an update on their advice about the **justice system**.



The justice system makes sure everyone is treated fairly and follows the law.



The justice system includes:

- prisons
- courts
- police.



Reference Group members shared ideas about what this advice should include.

## Update on other Reference Group meetings

Reference Group members have had extra meetings outside of their usual meetings from:

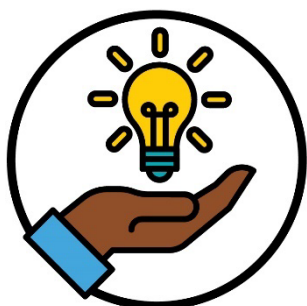


- July 2025

to



- November 2025.



Members had 2 meetings to talk about spaces that support ideas from First Nations people.

Members also had meetings to talk about:



- cultural safety



- the IAC's advice about the justice system



- **navigators.**

Navigators will help people with disability to:

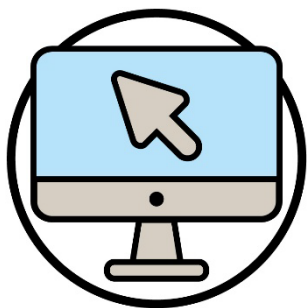


- learn about different supports
- connect with experts
- find and use the supports they need.

## Our next meeting



Our next meeting is on **4–5 March 2026**.



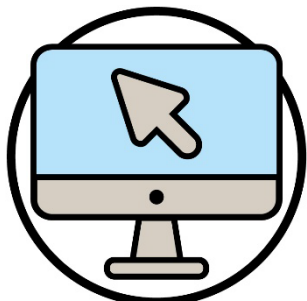
You can find out more about our meetings and bulletins on our website.

[www.ndis-iac.com.au/meetings](http://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](http://www.ndis-iac.com.au)



You can send us an email.

[advisorycouncil@ndis.gov.au](mailto:advisorycouncil@ndis.gov.au)



You can learn more about the NDIS on their website.

[www.ndis.gov.au](http://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**

When something is culturally safe, people feel:

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



### **Funding**

Funding is money from an NDIS plan that pays for the supports a participant needs.



## Funding periods

Funding periods tell a participant:

- how long their funding needs to last
- when they can start using more funding.



## Justice system

The justice system makes sure everyone is treated fairly and follows the law.

The justice system includes:

- prisons
- courts
- police.



## Navigators

Navigators will help people with disability to:

- learn about different supports
- connect with experts
- find and use the supports they need.



### NDIA Board

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



### NDIS plan

An NDIS plan has information about:

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



### NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission)

The NDIS Commission makes sure participants:

- are safe
- get good services.



### NDIS worker screening test

The NDIS worker screening check finds out if a person is safe to work with participants.



### Participants

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



### Providers

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.



### Short-term respite

Short-term respite services look after people with disability for a short amount of time.

This is so carers can have a break.



### Strategy

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



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