



First Nations Reference Group

Easy Read meeting bulletin

4–5 March 2026



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 [23](#).



We wrote this **bulletin**.

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

It explains what we did in our meeting.



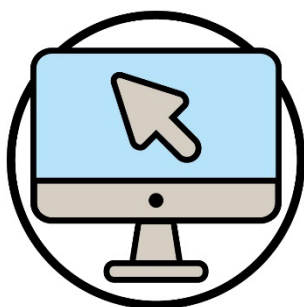
You can ask someone you trust for support to:

- 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

What's in this bulletin?

Acknowledgement of Country 2

About this Reference Group 6

What issues did the community share? 9

Update from the IAC 19

Update from the NDIA 20

Our next meeting 21

More information 22

Word list 23

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

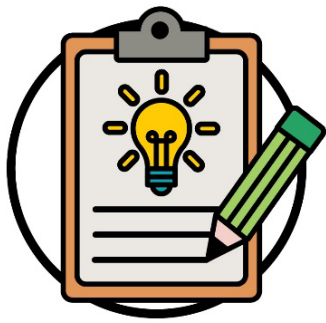


- use supports and services that are **culturally safe.**



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.

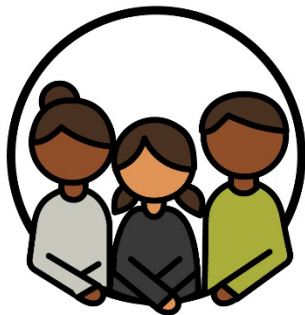


People from the NDIA also shared their response to some of these issues.

Travel costs for sorry business



Reference Group members talked about **sorry business**.



Sorry business is when First Nations people come together after a community member passes away.



The community takes part in:

- ceremonies
- cultural activities
- a funeral.



Members said some people need to travel for sorry business.



They asked if First Nations participants could have travel costs for sorry business in their **NDIS plans**.



An NDIS plan has information about:

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



The NDIA said it is working on rules about travel costs for sorry business.

Specialist disability accommodation



Specialist disability accommodation (SDA) is housing for people with disability who need extra support most of the time.



Reference Group members said the NDIA isn't giving SDA supports to a lot of First Nations participants.



This means many participants are living in:

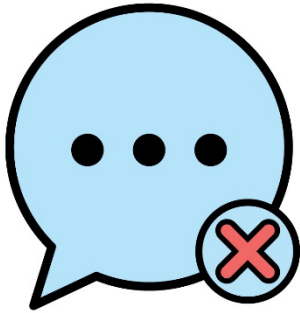
- hospitals
- nursing homes.



Some participants end up **homeless**.

People who are homeless don't have a safe place to live.

People feel the NDIA:



- doesn't explain why these participants can't use SDA supports



- should do more to support participants to find other types of housing.



The NDIA said they need to communicate better with participants.

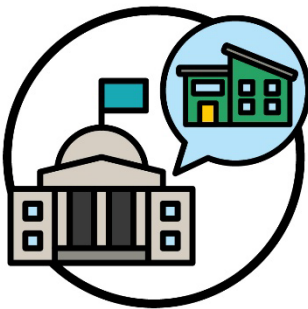
They are working on this.



The NDIA said the NDIS doesn't provide **funding** for housing costs.



Funding is money from your NDIS plan that pays for the supports you need.



State and territory governments provide other types of housing.

Issues with NDIS plans



Reference Group members said the NDIA sometimes starts a participant's NDIS plan again when it finishes.

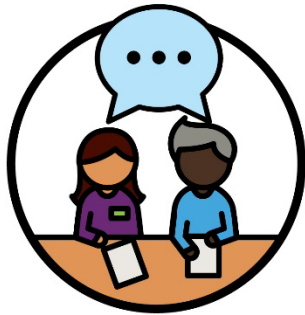


But they don't:

- tell participants this will happen
- check that the plan still works well for the participant.



The NDIA said this shouldn't happen.



The NDIS should have **check-ins** with participants about their plan.

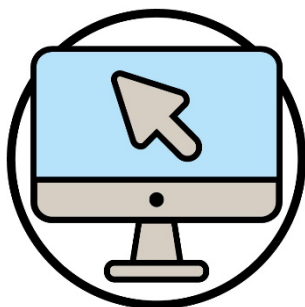


A check-in is when the NDIS talks with a participant about:

- how their plan is going
- if anything needs to change.



The NDIA said participants can contact the NDIS if they have issues with their plan.



You can visit the NDIS website.

www.ndis.gov.au/contact



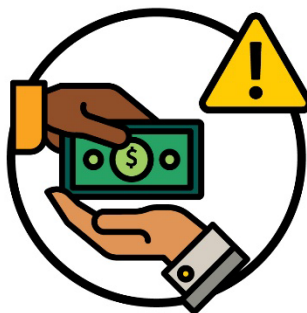
There is also a culturally safe option for First Nations participants.



Participants can also contact their **Local Area Coordinator**.

A Local Area Coordinator is someone who helps people with disability find and use supports and services.

Costs of running services



Reference Group members said some Aboriginal organisations are struggling with the cost of running their services.

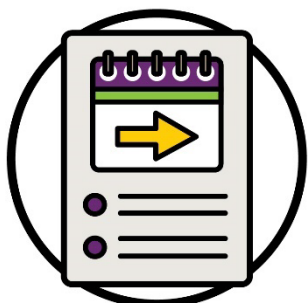


This is making many communities worry about the future.

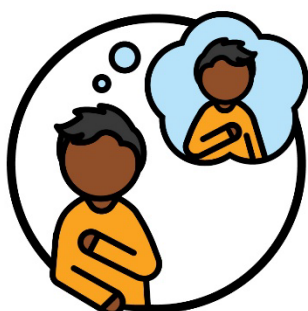
Gender strategy



Reference Group members asked for an update on the new **gender strategy** the NDIA is working on.



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



Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

There are more genders than only men and women.



The NDIA said it had to stop working on the gender strategy for a while.

The NDIA said it is focussing on:



- setting up the new way of making NDIS plans



- making participant **safeguarding** better.

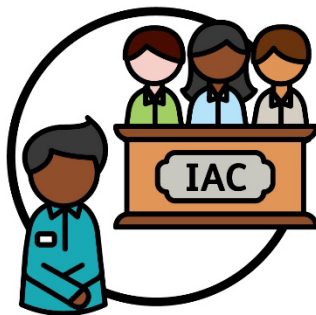


Safeguarding is making sure people with disability are safe when they use disability services.

Update from the IAC



The IAC **Independent Advisors** shared information about the advice they're working on.



Independent Advisors are people who work with the IAC and Reference Groups.



They told Reference Group members about their home and living advice.

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 new way of making NDIS plans.



Members shared that it was important to know who would start using this new way first.



Members also said the new way of making NDIS plans should have a culturally safe **support needs assessment**.



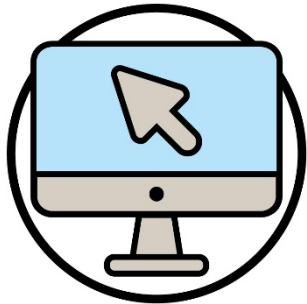
Support needs assessments help the NDIA work out:

- how a person's disability affects their life
- what supports a person needs.

Our next meeting



Our next meeting is on **15–16 July 2026.**

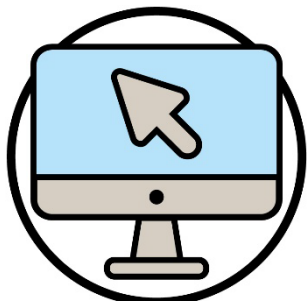


You can find out more about our meetings and bulletins on our website.

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

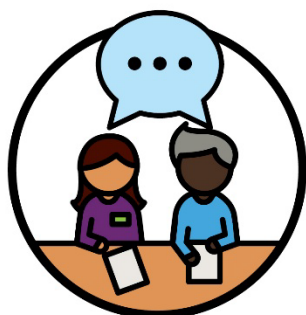
This list explains what the **bold** words in this bulletin mean.



Bulletin

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

It explains what we did in our last meeting.



Check-ins

A check-in is when the NDIS talks with a participant about:

- how their plan is going
- if anything needs to change.



Country

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



Culturally safe

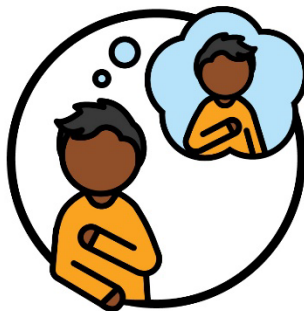
When something is culturally safe, people feel:

- 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.



Gender

Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

There are more genders than only men and women.



Homeless

People who are homeless don't have a safe place to live.



Independent Advisors

Independent Advisors are people who work with the IAC and Reference Groups.



Local Area Coordinator

A Local Area Coordinator is someone who helps people with disability 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.



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.



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.



Safeguarding

Safeguarding is making sure people with disability are safe when they use disability services.



Sorry business

Sorry business is when First Nations people come together after a community member passes away.

The community takes part in:

- ceremonies
- cultural activities
- a funeral.



Specialist disability accommodation

Specialist disability accommodation (SDA) is housing for people with disability who need extra support most of the time.



Strategy

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



Support needs assessment

Support needs assessments help the NDIA work out:

- how a person's disability affects their life
- what supports a person needs.



The Information Access Group created this Easy Read document using stock photography and custom images.

The images may not be reused without permission.

For any enquiries about the images, please visit

www.informationaccessgroup.com.

Quote job number 6212-B.



**Independent
Advisory
Council**

to the **ndis**



ndis-iac.com.au