

Independent Advisory Council Meeting Bulletin 20 August 2020

The Independent Advisory Council (Council) to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was established to bring the participant's voice to the heart of the NDIS. The Council provides independent advice to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Board, as outlined in the NDIS Act 2013.

This Bulletin provides an overview of the topics discussed at the meeting of 20 August 2020. Principal Member, Ms Robyn Kruk AO, attended the meeting, together with Council Members and Expert Adviser.

This meeting was the first meeting of the new Council membership, appointed by the Minister for the NDIS, The Hon. Stuart Robert MP, on 1 July 2020.

Principal Member Welcome

The Principal Member, Ms Robyn Kruk AO, acknowledged the legacy of former Principal Members, Mr John Walsh AM and Prof Rhonda Galbally AC, who made outstanding contributions to the NDIS in their roles, both within Council and the NDIA Board.

Council paid tribute to Ms Sue Salthouse, Council Member from 2017-2020, who sadly passed away in July 2020. Members highlighted Sue's enormous contributions to the disability community, particularly to women with disability.

Agency Response to Council's Advice

The following items include updates on the revised Agency responses to Council's advice. Pending Board approval, the Council's advice and Agency responses will progress to the Ministerial Council.

- **Participants who are Parents**

Dr Sam Bennett, General Manager Policy, Advice & Research, provided an update on the Agency response to Council's advice '[NDIS Supports for Participants who are Parents](#)', submitted to the NDIA Board in April 2020.

Dr Bennett said that the advice identified a gap in NDIS supports that needs to be urgently addressed. The Agency response describes the actions the NDIA needs to take to respond to Council's recommendations, and involves 13 different business areas within the Agency, as well as work with other government agencies.

Council highlighted the importance of having informal supports for parents, which are sustainable into the future. Members noted the need for highly trained staff to understand the anxiety pregnancy brings for some people with disability, due to its association with child services, particularly for people with intellectual disability and those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

- **Support for Decision Making**

Dr Bennett also provided an overview of the Agency response to Council's advice '[Support for Decision Making in the NDIS](#)'.

Dr Bennett emphasised the importance of this advice for all participants, saying that support for decision making is now an NDIA corporate priority.

Members discussed the importance of having the right people providing these supports. Council stressed the need for strategic investment to support participant's outcomes in this area, and the critical importance of a close working relationship between the NDIA and the Department of Social Services, who will now manage the information linkages and capacity building (ILC) funding program.

- **Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI)**

Mr Luke Napolitano, General Manager, Partner and Contact Centre, presented the updated Agency response to Council's advice '[Promoting Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention](#)'. The updated response incorporates Council's feedback provided at the meeting of 26 May 2020 as well as key performance indicators (KPIs) and focus points, for better monitoring and evaluation.

Mr Napolitano thanked Ms Sylvana Mahmic, Ms Ara Cresswell and Ms Belinda Epstein-Frisch AM for their invaluable feedback and contributions to the broader NDIA work on ECEI.

Council's Focus for 2020-2021

The Principal Member noted Council's work program and highlights from the previous year, highlighting the scope and range of Council's formal and informal advice.

The Principal Member said that the NDIA Board will be invited to identify priorities for Council's advice at the 26 August 2020 Board meeting, in line with [Council's Operating Model](#).

Members discussed self-identified priorities for Council, agreeing to focus in detail on a smaller subset of issues for the greatest impact. Council aims to have their work program for 2020-21 finalised by October 2020.

Next meetings

The Council will next meet on 9 September 2020.

You can access previous papers and advice from the Independent Advisory Council to the NDIS on the Council's website: <https://www.ndis-iac.com.au/advice>.