

Independent Advisory Council Meeting Bulletin 12 November 2020

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

This Bulletin summarises the Council's 12 November 2020 meeting, chaired by Ms Robyn Kruk AO, Principal Member, and attended by Mr Martin Hoffman, NDIA Chief Executive Officer, Council Members and Expert Adviser.

From the Council's Principal Member

The Principal Member welcomed [Dr Leighton Jay](#) to his first Council meeting as Member, recognising Dr Jay's sector leadership, advocacy and expertise, as well as his experience and insight as the parent of an NDIS participant.

The Principal Member explained her recent work with [Ms Leah van Poppel](#), who was recently appointed as Council's Deputy Chair. In this role, Ms van Poppel will work closely with the Principal Member and Council Secretariat in the preparation of Council and Reference Group meetings, and Council's formal and informal advice.

The Principal Member welcomed NDIA's recent appointment of Daniel Leighton as Strategic Advisor Intellectual Disability.

An update on the Council's Reference Group review process was provided. The Council is carefully, yet quickly, working to assemble a representative group of diverse voices for its new Reference Groups.

Progress on Independent Assessments (IA)

Dr Sam Bennett, NDIA General Manager, Policy, Advice and Research, said that [Independent Assessments](#) (IA) remain a major focus for the Agency.

The NDIA is progressing the first phase of its IA Consultation Plan, meeting with an IA Subgroup of Council and other stakeholders to address sector and participant concerns.

The NDIA will publicly release a range of new resources on IAs, which aim to start a new round of consultation and feedback from participants and the sector, specifically on IA implementation for access, planning, plan flexibility, and Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI).

Council raised the importance of looking at the interface between IA and the role of NDIA liaison officers, local area coordinators and community connectors, which is not in the scope of the IA pilot. Members also reiterated the need to focus on accessible, accurate and sustained communications on IA and the pilot, including participant case studies.

From the Scheme Actuary

Ms Sarah Johnson, NDIA Scheme Actuary, presented the work to date between the NDIA and Council to improve the [Participant Satisfaction Survey](#) (PSS). The role of Council in the

PSS follows from the 2019 Tune Review recommendation to develop an independent and improved version of the survey.

Ms Johnson said that in October the delivery of the PSS moved from the NDIA's National Contact Centre to Australian Healthcare Associates (AHA), which resulted in an increased survey sample size, improving efficiencies and results. The NDIA will start reporting on these results in the next NDIS Quarterly Report.

The NDIA Scheme Actuary is working with the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability and Speak Out Tasmania to test the PSS for Easy English. Council will continue to work with the Scheme Actuary on the PSS out of session.

Ms Johnson also provided an overview of the key highlights included in the latest [NDIS Quarterly Report for Q1 2020-2021](#).

National Disability Strategy Outcomes Frameworks

Stephen Moger, Branch Manager Disability Policy, Department of Social Services (DSS), sought Council's feedback on the [National Disability Strategy \(NDS\) Outcomes Frameworks](#).

Mr Moger said that the new NDS will have a strong focus on measurement and accountability, with the Outcomes Frameworks tracking progress against elements of the strategy. A public consultation focusing on key outcomes to be included is underway, with submissions closing on 18 December 2020. The Principal Member confirmed Council will be providing a submission.

Mr Moger thanked Council for its valuable input to the NDS Position Paper consultation saying that the government's proposals for the next NDS will be implemented through cross government leadership and involvement of people with disability.

Council saw action on employment as of critical importance within the NDS, noting the current disincentives and barriers to employment for people with disability and the need to improve linkages between the education and employment sectors.

Members also raised the importance of the NDS having a clear link to justice and child protection systems, including the provision of data on children with disability in out of home care, and the interaction of parents with disability and the child protection system.

Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program

Karen Pickering, Branch Manager, Information, Linkages & Capacity Building Information, DSS, discussed the transfer of the [Information, Linkages and Capacity Building \(ILC\)](#) program from the NDIA to DSS.

The NDIA and DSS have worked closely to ensure the smooth transition of the program by the end of 2020, to ensure minimal disruption to the continuity of grant delivery and an ongoing collaboration between NDIA and DSS to support the delivery of the ILC program.

Ms Pickering said that DSS will continue to deliver the ILC program in line with the current ILC Policy Framework and ILC Investment Strategy, which runs to June 2022.

Council noted the disproportionately low funding allocated to the ILC in relation to its significant mandate within the NDIS, and that the short-term project nature of its funding

approach made sustainability very difficult for community organisations. Members recommended that any new investment strategy prioritises organisations that employ people with disability and suggested investment in projects targeting families of young children as a sustainable approach to build capacity in participants.

Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Implementation Reset Project

Sumone Chakravarti, NDIA Branch Manager, Strategy, and Luke Napolitano, NDIA General Manager, Partner & Contact Centre, presented the findings and recommendations on the [Early Childhood Early Intervention \(ECEI\) Implementation Reset Project](#) for Council's feedback, before progressing to the NDIA Board.

This work was informed by numerous reports, including the Tune Review, Council's formal advice '[Promoting best practice in early childhood intervention](#)', and responses from peak bodies, which has highlighted the challenges in the implementation of the NDIA's ECEI Approach that have undermined its strategic intent.

Council has worked closely with the NDIA in the ECEI Reset project and both Members and NDIA staff noted the positive outcome of this collaboration, which demonstrated the effectiveness of Council's Operating Model.

Members noted the challenges to make the ECEI pathway easier for vulnerable participants and the emphasis on best practice delivery of supports.

Council's next meeting

The Council will next meet on 11 December 2020. You can find out more about Council meetings at the [Council's website meeting page \(external\)](#).

Find out more

You can access previous papers and advice from the [Council's website advice page \(external\)](#).

In line with the Council's commitment to accessibility, an Easy Read version of this Bulletin will be released seven days after this Bulletin is published.