

Independent Advisory Council Home and Living Reference Group Meeting Bulletin 13 May 2021

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has an Independent Advisory Council (Council). Council gives independent advice to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Board. This is a part of the NDIS Act 2013.

Council brings the participant's voice to the heart of the NDIS. It does this by using its four reference groups, to inform and improve its advice. Reference groups include members with expertise and experience in specific areas of disability.

The Home and Living Reference Group (Reference Group) gives advice to the Council. This advice is about home and living supports for people with disability to:

- live independently
- choose where they want to live
- do things for themselves in their homes
- be included in the community they live.

This Bulletin summarises the 13 May 2021 Reference Group meeting, led by:

- Ms Robyn Kruk AO, Council Principal Member and Reference Group Co-Chair
- Dr Leighton Jay, Council Member and Reference Group Co-Chair
- NDIA Representatives and Council Secretariat.

From the Reference Group Co-Chairs

Ms Kruk said the Reference Group will help people with disability have access to homes for living, rather than just places where services happen. The Reference Group gives:

- Members the opportunity to influence NDIA policy and practice in home and living
- NDIA staff access to people with disability and expertise in home and living.

She noted that the work of the Reference Group links to Council's annual Work Plan and the NDIA Corporate Plan priorities.

Dr Jay spoke about:

- The role the Reference Group will play to shape the 'idea of a home' for people with a disability in the NDIS.
- Council's work with the NDIA on the Home and Living Consultation Paper, which will be released soon.

Reference Group member reports

Reference Group members reported on concerns they've heard from people with disability in their communities.

They said they've heard about:

- People with disability who live in Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) or Supported Independent Living (SIL). Some of these people feel that:
 - their adult guardians do not include or consider their needs or wishes in decision making.
 - there are a lack of supports for those partners of people with disability who pass away in SDA.
- Issues with SDA standards. With SDA housing built in areas that are hard to reach or hinder inclusion. Most SDA houses are far from amenities, public transport, community centres, and parks.
- Most people with disability welcome the National Construction Code's new minimum accessibility standards for new homes. But they want Australian states and territories to lift the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines from silver to gold standard.
- Some people with a disability find it hard to get long term housing. People who move out of aged care or group home settings are often placed in temporary accommodation.
- Some people with disability feel disadvantaged by NDIS policies and discussions about sustainability. They say participants are directly affected by the NDIA's cost savings.
- People with disability need sustainable ILO. They also need support from Local Area Coordinators (LACs), Support Coordinators and Recovery Coaches to move into ILO. People with psychosocial disability, who are in hospital and jail, need the most help to better understand NDIS funded supports that will help them:
 - when they move out of these settings
 - live in a way that suits them
 - live in ILO arrangements for a long time.
- NDIS participants want to better understand the evidence needed by the NDIA to make reasonable and necessary decisions. This would especially help people with complex disability and their supporters save time, energy and money to access the NDIS.
- Challenges for NDIS participants who are getting old, and those participants with ageing parents.
- NDIS operational issues, with:
 - Concerns that people with disability are not allowed to live alone in SDA.
 - Long delays in funding approval which goes against principles in the Participant Service Charter.
 - Volunteers participating in the Independent Assessment (IA) Pilot experiencing long delays to receive their results.
 - Families of children needing to regularly give proof and evidence for home supports.

Update of NDIA work on home and living

Mr Trent Tolra is the NDIA Branch Manager for Agency Policy. He updated the Reference Group on the:

- Home and Living Consultation paper. He spoke about how this paper links to Scheme reform priorities and other NDIA consultation work, like support for decision making.
- ILO operational guidelines and associated public workshops.

Reference Group members gave feedback on:

- The language used in the Home and Living Consultation paper. The paper should include:
 - A vision statement that promotes citizenship and what an ordinary life can mean for NDIS participants.
- Be inclusive of all people with disability, including people in hospitals and jails, in unsustainable living situations, and people who have never received support and struggle to communicate what they need.
- The concept of home differs amongst people and cultures. For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders home is linked to community living.
- The sustainability of ILO arrangements, given that Australian states and territories do not have enough affordable and accessible social housing.
- Need to meaningfully engage with people with disability, so that they can access information and give feedback on publicly available documents. This will ensure the documents accurately communicate their original purpose.

Reference Group priorities

Dr Jay led discussions on priorities for the Reference Group. This includes advisory work it will complete in its three-year term, until June 2023. The priorities aim to provide solutions to home and living issues in the NDIS.

The Reference Group will finalise its priorities out of session. The priorities will align with Council's Work Plan and advice, and the NDIA Corporate Plan.

More information on the Reference Group

The Reference Group will next meet in the second half of 2021. You can find out more about Council meetings at the [Council's website meeting page \(external\)](#). You can access advice from the [Council's website advice page \(external\)](#).

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