



The contents of this document are OFFICIAL

Reference Group meeting bulletin – 9 November 2022

Home and Living Reference Group

This Bulletin summarises the recent meeting of the [Home and Living Reference Group](#) (Reference Group). The Reference Group met on 9 November 2022.

The Reference Group gives advice to the Independent Advisory Council (Council) to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Its advice focuses on 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.

Leah van Poppel, Council Principal Member and Reference Group Co-chair led the meeting. [Dr Leighton Jay, Council Member and Reference Group Co-chair](#) supported Ms van Poppel at the meeting.

From the Reference Group Co-chairs

Ms van Poppel noted the work the Reference Group Members have done since their last meeting. She highlighted the experience Reference Group Members bring to the work of Council and the NDIA. She noted this was particularly important to the [co-design work](#) by the NDIA.

Reference Group Members' community reports

Reference Group Members reported on matters for the NDIA's attention. Members provide these reports on behalf of people with disability in their communities. The reports give the NDIA and staff understanding about issues from the ground. They also give the NDIA the opportunity to respond to themes, concerns, and opportunities raised by Members. Key matters Members noted this meeting included:

NDIS access and planning

- Continued reports of plan funding reductions without explanation.
- Reports some planners do not encourage participants to request an internal review about plan decisions. Especially for decisions concerning home and living support. These planners suggest that funding reductions will ensue if they do.
- Concerns that some planners lack training and understanding about the range of home and living supports. The more planners know the better they can tailor supports to a participant's needs.
- Some planners who meet participants via phone or videoconference are 'distanced' from their needs.
- NDIA staff and planners need to showcase real life examples of home and living funding that has allowed a person with disability to thrive. This will empower others with choice and control when building their NDIS goals.
- Some planners guide participants towards assistive technology that is not suited their needs. For example, some participants need their screen reader technology updated due to change in need. This is common with participants of school leaver age.
- The NDIA should introduce independent navigators. They will help overcome the barriers for people with psychosocial disabilities to access and navigate the NDIS.
- Some felt the NDIA should encourage participants to contest their plan review via the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

NDIS service and supports

- Continuing concern from parents who are ageing and who cannot continue to care for and support their child with a disability.
- Concerns that some participants in aged care settings need more individualised NDIS supports, that are not given by the aged care provider.
- There is a need to build the capacity of people with disability to explore and review their supports with service providers. This will lead to better choice and control.

NDIS home and living supports

- Some participants say there is a lack of options for accommodation. Particularly those who experience psychosocial disability.
- Suggestions that the NDIA should improve supported accommodation in the short term.
- The NDIA should share more 'personal stories' with government that showcase ways supported accommodation is a cheaper way to help people live independently.
- Concerns about the NDIA's process for reasonable and necessary decision making. Especially decisions the NDIA makes for participants with complex supports needs and as part of the NDIA Home and Living Panel. The NDIA should tell participants the evidence they base decisions on.



- There is misinformation in the community that the NDIS is phasing out improved liveability in specialist disability accommodation (SDA).
- Concern that some participants are not approved for single accommodation. The current view is that participants are mostly approved for shared accommodation.
- Participants with complex support needs may not be ready to have discussions with the NDIA about their home and living options. This is because they have never had choice and control in their lives.
- Some participants who have home modifications funded by the NDIS feel they cannot then move to a different home later. Also, some support coordinators tell participants the NDIS only funds one access ramp per home. There is a need to review the home modification guidelines.
- Current housing issues affect people with disability who want accessible housing and communities. This should be addresses as part of the SDA pricing review.

Other services and programs that give support

- Some people with acquired brain injury or psychosocial disability who use the justice system face bias that affects how people understand and engage with them.
- Governments are releasing COVID-19 related health information. But there is concern they are not engaging with people with disability, the elderly, and high-risk groups who are vulnerable to new variants.
- Some state appointed guardians make decisions for NDIS participants without the person's consent or knowledge.

NDIA Home and Living Framework update

The Reference Group received an update on work the NDIA is doing to make a Home and Living Framework. The Framework outlines the NDIA's goal to establish a consistent approach that will support participants to better understand, plan and implement their home and living supports. The NDIA has asked JFA Purple Orange to test home and living solutions with underrepresented people as part of its co-design work. They discussed some of their findings.

The NDIA asked for feedback from Members about their drafted Framework. Members' feedback included:

- The role of home and living partner in the Framework needs further definition and clarity, and the partner should complement existing supports.
- The suggestion that the home and living partner should be independent of the NDIA.
- General comments that planners, support coordinators and local area coordinators should improve skills in home and living to reduce the need for the home and living partner role.
- The Framework should allow for flexible use of plan budgets across all home and living supports.
- The need to integrate the results of Purple Orange's work into the Framework.
- The importance of the home and living co-design work to continue throughout the NDIS Review.



- The need for parts of Framework to link to other NDIA co-design work, such as Information Gathering for Access and Planning (IGAP).
- The need to rework some of the language used in the Framework. For example, avoiding words like 'assessment' and improving language around personal funding.
- The NDIA should review some of the design elements used in the Framework document for accessibility.
- The way the NDIA communicates information about the Framework should not solely focus on written information, there are more collaborative and inclusive ways to share information.
- The NDIA and provider markets should collaborate and be stewards for the cultural change articulated in the Framework.
- There is a need for the Framework to include whole-of-government collaboration on the issues around housing supply.
- The NDIA should reflect on lessons learnt and barriers faced by other disability reform opportunities to ensure it delivers on this Framework.
- The Framework should highlight the need for cultural competency around SDA and supported independent living (SIL).
- The Framework should include people with disability in state guardianship arrangements. This will create a sense of belonging for those people.
- The Framework's implementation is a key to success. The implementation should use process design/co-implementation.
- Changes to SDA may be impacted by legislative limitations.

More information on the Reference Group

The Home and Living Reference Group will next meet in 2023. Find out more about Reference Group meetings and bulletins at [Council's website](#). You can also access [Council's advice here](#).

Council publishes an Easy Read version Bulletin. This is part of its commitment to accessibility.