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## Meeting bulletin – 2 November 2023

This bulletin provides an overview of the recent meeting held by the Independent Advisory Council (IAC). The IAC's role is to provide advice to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Board, with the goal of improving the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The meeting, held via videoconference on 2 November 2023, was chaired by Ms Leah van Poppel who is the IAC's [Principal Member](#).

### Update from the IAC's Principal Member

Ms van Poppel acknowledged that the IAC are waiting for the appointments of 6 IAC member vacancies to be resolved through government decision-making processes.

Ms van Poppel provided an update on the IAC's advice and other important work since their [last meeting on 21 September 2023 \(DOCX 100KB\)](#). This includes engaging with the NDIA's work on their [new computer system PACE](#) and hospital discharge support. She also welcomed Ms Samantha Jenkinson as the new IAC Senior Independent Advisor, supporting the IAC to create their advice.

Ms van Poppel acknowledged the recent release of the final report from the [Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability](#) (Royal Commission). She thanked Commissioner Dr Rhonda Galbally AC for attending this meeting to update members on the Royal Commission outcomes.

Ms van Poppel also recognised the commitment of the NDIA Board, and thanked Board Members Ms Meredith Allan and Dr Denis Napthine AO for attending the meeting.

### Update from the NDIA

Dr Napthine AO, NDIA Board Member, shared updates from the NDIA Board. This includes their focus on improving hospital discharge and considerations of the risks and benefits of using artificial intelligence in the NDIS. The Board are also reviewing the Royal Commission recommendations and recently [published the NDIA annual report](#).

Ms Rebecca Falkingham PSM, NDIA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), updated the IAC on work being done to prepare for the outcomes of the independent review of the NDIS (NDIS Review). She also touched on the recent launch of PACE, and the Royal Commission's final report.

## What Members have heard in their community

[IAC Members](#) reported on matters for the NDIA's attention, related to:

### NDIS access and planning

- The delays in home and living decisions is impacting on participants' plans.
- It is important for the NDIA to support participants and their families, especially those who self-manage, on what will change because of PACE, the new NDIA computer system.

### NDIS service and supports

- Reports that some participants in Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) do not have enough On-site Overnight Assistance (OOA) in their plans.
- Calls for the NDIA to work with participants living in SDA to improve OOA.
- Members shared that some participants living in group SDA want NDIS planners to think about everyone living on the SDA site when they make individual participant's plans.
- Recommendation that the NDIA help families understand the risks of some early intervention therapies and how to choose safe service providers for their child.
- Concern that limiting registered providers for personal support care will take away choice and control for NDIS Participants.

### Disability community and other government services

- Reports that [Australian Taxation Office changes to paying domestic or private workers superannuation](#) is confusing self-managing participants about obligations when employing carers, creating stress and uncertainty among self-managing participants.
- Some self-managing participants feel that they don't have a voice in government decisions that may have a flow on affect to personal safety and finance.
- Positive sentiment that disability affairs are being promoted in the community because of the Royal Commission's final report.
- Highlighting the importance of the NDIS's role in supporting independence and social inclusion of people with disability related to segregated education.
- General commentary that the disability community have high hopes for the NDIS Review and that these expectations may need to be managed.

### Providers

- Reports that many early childhood intervention providers are questioning the meaning and value of registration following [recent media reports highlighting abuse at registered providers](#).



- Concern that some providers are using loopholes that negatively impact participants and the NDIS. For example, charging administration costs for NDIS plans.
- Continued concern for not-for-profit providers in financial trouble and how some do not have insurance because they cannot afford it.

## Reflections of the Royal Commission

Dr Galbally shared her experience and insight with the Royal Commission, which released [its final report](#) on 29 September 2023. She emphasised the next steps for the government in response to the final report, as well as the importance of the IAC's engagement with the report and representing people in the disability community.

Members also reflected on the need to improve:

- home and living supports for people who want to live alone
- inclusion for people with disability in education settings.

## Discussing the demand for SIL

Mr Scott McNaughton, NDIA Deputy CEO of Service Delivery, gave an update on [Supported Independent Living \(SIL\)](#), including the need to balance participant choice and control with the Scheme sustainability.

Members shared the following thoughts and feedback:

- There is a confusion in the community about SIL and what home and living options are available.
- Calls for the NDIS to work towards offering participants home and living packages customised to their needs.
- [Individualised living options \(ILO\)](#) could support people to live alone but have not been used as much as SIL. Members recommended work to find out what is stopping people from using ILO.
- Advocating for better communication with support coordinators and the community on ILO. The NDIA should promote ILO to increase inclusion and encourage more Australians to become housemates of people with disability under ILO arrangements.
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- While the NDIA must manage the costs of running the NDIS, people with disability have the right to exercise choice and control to live independently.

## Discussion of IAC and IAC Reference Group Work Plans

Members discussed the priority work areas that have been proposed from the IAC's 4 Reference Groups, and ways the Reference Groups' planning aligns and coordinates with the IAC's future Work Plan. Members noted that careful consideration of IAC and Reference Group proposed priorities is needed to avoid duplication.



## More information on the IAC

The IAC's next meeting will be held on 7 December 2023. Find out more about IAC meetings and bulletins at the [IAC website](#). You can also access advice from the [IAC website](#).

**The IAC publishes an Easy Read version of this bulletin. This is part of its commitment to accessibility.**