

Thriving Kids Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

September 2025

Purpose of the Advisory Group

Established by the Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Ageing, and the Minister Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the Thriving Kids Advisory Group (the Group) will bring together diverse expertise to shape and support the national design of Thriving Kids.

Thriving Kids will deliver a national system of supports outside the NDIS for children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and disability with low to moderate needs, and their families.

The Group, Co-Chaired by Minister Butler and Professor Frank Oberklaid AM, will consider findings from the NDIS Review, the Parliamentary Inquiry into Thriving Kids, national Foundational Supports consultations, and input from other sources.

The Group will progress its advice through 3 rapid phases:

- a. **Stocktake and Exploration:** The Group will discuss work undertaken to-date and explore findings from other reviews, analysis, frameworks and evidence-based literature to support collective understanding of the service system, and any gaps, for the in-scope cohort.

The Group will then provide preliminary advice on key elements of the potential service model/s across both Commonwealth and state responsibilities.

- b. **Refinement:** The Group would provide initial advice on key components of a model for delivery of Thriving Kids across Australia. The Group will work to refine the model or models and program landscape, and consider other inputs and evidence.
- c. **Final advice:** The Group will then finalise their advice. This may cover proposed service models/service scope, outcomes monitoring/evaluation, implementation considerations, cohort considerations, commissioning and advice related to communication/engagement strategies.

The Group is not intended to replicate or duplicate existing governance or forums that provide an opportunity for stakeholders to communicate to government on health and disability reforms. Existing channels of engagement and consultation will continue to provide other sources of advice to governments.

The Group is responsible for providing advice for the consideration of all governments as part of their design and negotiation work on Thriving Kids.

Background

In December 2023, National Cabinet agreed the Commonwealth and state and territory governments jointly fund additional supports for people with disability called Foundational Supports. Governments are working together to design and implement these supports in a phased approach.

Roles and responsibilities

The Group will provide advice to the Minister on the matters in scope.

As required, select deep dives with relevant stakeholders may be utilised to support the Advisory Group's advice to the Government. These would include Autistic people and the autism community and sector, Disability Representative Organisations, service providers, colleges with specialist expertise, unions (incl. Australian Services Union, Health Services Union, United Workers Union, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Australian Education Union), etc.

Deep dives will be organised by the secretariat with the co-chair Professor Oberklaid leading. Other Expert Advisory Group members invited as optional and pending their availability. Notes from deep-dives will be share with all members.

Membership

Membership, determined by the Minister, will be drawn from experts in the fields of paediatrics, child development, research, disability, child and family services, health care, and early education and schools and First Nations perspective. In addition to the independent experts, two service system advisors from the states and territories will be included.

Invited Guests

The Co-Chairs may invite an expert or official to participate in discussions for specific agenda items, as appropriate.

Remuneration of members

Members will be engaged by the Department and remunerated for work directly linked to their attendance according to eligibility under the Departmental Remuneration Framework. If meeting face to face, members would receive travel

entitlements under Tier 2 of the *Remuneration Tribunal (Official Travel) Determination 2025*.

Duration of the Group

The Group is expected to complete its main work from September to December 2025, with potential for extension to July 2026.

Meetings

Cadence of meetings will vary to support the Group's purpose. The Group is expected to meet at least 3 times across September to December 2025 and meet as required up to July 2026.

The primary platform for meetings will be face to face, and via Microsoft Teams as required.

Secretariat support

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing will provide secretariat support.

Conflicts of interest

Members must declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest which could impact their ability to perform their duties. Members will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest prior to commencement of their term and should provide any updates to the Secretariat for the visibility of Co-Chairs as changes arise.

Confidentiality

Members may receive confidential material that has privacy or security implications. This information can only be used for approved purposes. Members must comply with the Confidentiality Deed entered into upon their appointment. Members have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality of all information that is not in the public domain, including but not limited to deliberations of the Group.

Members may seek advice from the Group secretariat where they have queries about confidential information and circumstances in which it may be shared beyond the Group.

Where agreed by the Co-Chairs, members can discuss topics with a wider pre-agreed group in order to fulfill the duties outlined in the Terms of Reference (for example, testing with a sample of GPs that a referral process may work as intended).

State and territory representatives are invited to act as a conduit to other states to ensure they can contribute knowledge about the different state and territory service systems. This role entails seeking advice to input into meetings but does not extend to conversations with other parties on the discussions or workings of the Group.

Information must be treated confidentially and appropriate due diligence be given in the provision or circulation of confidential information.

Privacy

As part of the Group function and roles, the Group may have access to personal information as defined in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act).

As set out in the Confidentiality Deed entered into on their appointment, Advisory Group members must abide by the provisions of the Privacy Act, including the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act. An Advisory Group member must not do an act, or engage in a practice, that would breach an Australian Privacy Principle if done or engaged in by the Department.

The Australian Privacy Principles are available on the Australian Government Office of the Australian Information Commissioner website at

www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/australian-privacy-principles/read-the-australian-privacy-principles.

Termination of membership

The Department may terminate members for reasons including the member is found to be neglecting their duties or acting in a manner conflicting with their roles, responsibilities and obligations as covered in these Terms of Reference, or acting in an inappropriate manner.

Resignation

Members are asked to provide a months' notice should they choose to resign. Written resignations should be made to the Co-Chairs and copied to the Secretariat.