Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

NDIS new framework planning: what we've heard

A summary report of disability sector feedback between September and December 2025.

Overview

At the end of 2025, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the department) shared information with disability sector representatives about proposed changes to NDIS rules related to new framework planning.

In September, the department held online sessions with Disability Representative Organisations (DROs), Disability Representative and Carer Organisations (DRCOs), and state and territory peak bodies. The sessions explained the proposed new planning process and asked for feedback to help shape new NDIS rules and resources to engage with the broader public.

In response to feedback at these sessions the department and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) ran a webinar series in November and December. The webinars gave people the chance to hear from experts and ask questions about the proposed changes.

This report summarises the main themes from the feedback we received. Responses to questions were addressed where possible during the sessions. More information will be shared on the DHDA and NDIA websites

We are using feedback we have heard to inform the drafting of new planning rules and public consultation processes.

Supports needs assessment and process design

People want to know:

- how the assessment will work
- the skills and qualifications of assessors
- how long it will take
- if it applies to everyone or only new plans.

People asked for face-to-face assessments where possible. They suggested alternative options for longer sessions and to tailor the process to individual communication needs.

Some suggested capturing participant goals should be a mandatory part of the assessment process.

People want to help participants prepare for assessments. They wanted to know what information assessors will use; they asked to see draft reports and have a chance to respond before the report is final.

Tools and evidence (assessment tools)

People asked if basing the assessment tool is suitable for funding decisions. They wanted to know if it can capture complex, changing conditions and progressive disabilities.

People asked for evidence that the tool has been tested with diverse groups, including:

- First Nations peoples
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- LGBTQIA+ communities
- people in rural and remote areas

There were concerns about ethics, research and safety. People asked if non-allied health staff can use the tool for complex needs and how validation will happen. Some are concerned that the tool will not cover daily support needs and miss capacity-building needs.

Questions were raised about using and adapting the assessment tool for different age groups. Some suggested a separate process for 16 to 18-year-olds. People said children should not be included until child-appropriate tools and processes are ready.

Workforce, training and standards

People said they want clear information about who will do the support needs assessments. For example, if it would be NDIA staff or allied health professionals.

They were concerned that assessors without the right skills might not understand what people need.

People said assessors should have:

- knowledge about different disabilities
- understanding of different cultures
- official checks and registration (for example, through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency).

Some people suggested using independent assessors or consultants with lived experience to make fair decisions.

People wanted to know what training assessors will get and who will teach it. They suggested training should include:

- supporting people who have experienced trauma
- understanding neurodiversity
- ways to help with communication
- rare and complex conditions

- family violence risk.

There were concerns about not having enough trained workers in some areas.

Fair, consistent and accessible

People said they want fair outcomes. They want assessors who understand the type of disability and the local community.

They asked for:

- interpreters and support people
- ways that work for people living in group homes
- support for First Nations communities in remote areas.

People want communication and report to be in plain language and in accessible formats.

Participant voice, rights and transparency

People want enough time to prepare and get support if needed. People said they need clear and simple communication in a way that suits them.

They want:

- to know what information is kept about them
- to help design the process
- a chance to check drafts before they are final
- to see how their feedback is used.

They asked for clear rules and accountability, including:

- how Artificial Intelligence (AI) or computer systems help set budgets
- how people will check and oversee these systems.

People said informed consent is very important. They want clear ways to review, dispute or appeal decisions. They want ways to share their experiences, for example through NDIA’s Participant Reference Group.

Planning, budgeting and implementation

People are concerned that basing the assessment on the tool might replace or reduce funding for allied health reports. People are worried about bias when budgets are set. They said they do not understand how rules will decide funding or how assessment tool scores will be used in budget systems.

They want to know:

- how budgets will be set
- which supports are flexible and which are fixed
- how quickly changes can be made when needs change.

People asked if they would have to pay for assessments from their plans.

They want planning meetings to happen on time, with practical help to use plans and find services. Some said these meetings should be mandatory.

People are worried about not having enough services in some areas. They fear losing funding if they cannot spend their budgets because services are not available.

Appeals and accountability

People said that assessments might lead to plans that do not meet their needs, which could make things worse for people with disability.

People want:

- quick reassessments and reviews
- clear information about decisions
- to keep their current appeal rights, including for debt decisions.

Communication and engagement

People said communication must be clear, timely and meet different communication needs.

This includes:

- easy read materials
- visual aids
- timelines
- sample questions from assessment tools.

Some suggested co design and ongoing consultation with First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and LGBTIQA+ communities should start early.

Organisations want clear information about consultation goals, timelines and expectations. They also want to test the process before it begins.

System and transition

People felt there have been constant changes and unclear information.

Concerns were raised about how the framework fits with the law and operational guidelines. They want clear information about how the rules are used.

People are worried about moving to new framework plans before foundational supports are ready. They asked for a slow and supported change, with trauma informed communication. They want to know how vulnerable people will be supported during the process.

Consultation process

People said they felt that consultation processes were not transparent and felt tokenistic. They felt engagement with the disability community is limited and some decisions are made before consulting.

Other concerns included:

- People felt self-reported evidence is dismissed, so they do not trust the process.
- timing of the assessment tool procurement did not allow time for comprehensive consultations with sector
- clarity of language, and use of specific wording which can be open to different interpretations

Next steps

The department will be running public consultation on new framework planning rules in early 2026.

Stay up to date with the latest information about new framework planning through our website New framework planning.

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