



NDIS Reform Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary – Tuesday 3 February 2026

The Committee met on Tuesday, 3 February 2026. The meeting began by acknowledging how tough things currently feel for many people with disability and families. Understanding of and sensitivity to those sentiments should guide how reform is communicated and delivered. RAC members want the focus of reform to stay on improving the NDIS to ensure it supports people to have better lives, not harder.

Department officials gave an initial update on the National Health Reform Agreement, following National Cabinet agreement in January 2026. Discussion centred on funding for Thriving Kids and Foundational Supports. Members acknowledged that all governments had finally agreed on the big picture. The greater clarity and strategic certainty will help families to understand better how change will occur.

Members expressed strong concern about the short time available for states to design, consult, hire staff and start delivering initial services by October 2026 (on the development path to nationwide implementation by mid-2028). State representatives acknowledged that commissioning and set-up work will run very close to the initial commencement of services.

RAC Members also raised concerns that early messaging about Thriving Kids had sounded like parents would be expected to take on more responsibility rather than receiving timely, adequate child-centred support. Members stressed the model must be co-designed with lived experience and be culturally safe, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. People called for greater clarity and clearer public communication on what has been decided alongside matters still to be designed and determined through strong, independent and informed needs community input.

The Committee then considered early drafts of the proposed new NDIS Supports Rule. The department explained its intention behind the shift to fewer categories of NDIS supports. There will be 22 broader categories rather than the current 36. The new categories will be aligned with the Support Needs Assessment and Budget setting NDIS Rules (consultations underway) rather than NDIS Registration groups. The design intention is to ensure most of the participant's supports are funded within a single flexible "in-home and community" type category (rather than stated supports).

Members agreed that simpler arrangements are better but said the current draft is still too technical and hard to understand. RAC members requested more plain-English explanations for the community about how flexible budgets work, when and how any individual support need would become specifically identified ("stated"), and how therapy is being categorised.

RAC Members expressed some concern that very broad support categories could unintentionally give to complacent providers further power over participants, especially people in group homes, people with limited informal supports, or people with cognitive disability. There was also strong concern about the lack of explicit reference within the draft Rule to support for decision-making. RAC members sought a change to the draft rule to clearly state rights-based decision support rather than defaulting to substitute

decision-making. Members pointed out missing words like “civic participation,” which have practical significance for funding assistance so that people can exercise their rights in the community. Members also asked that therapy categories not be restricted to a narrow clinical model that doesn’t match how people use therapy in real life.

A different discussion concentrated on the second NDIS Amendment Bill with a focus on greater penalties, compliance and fraud controls. Members supported action against poor or unsafe providers but raised concerns that integrity measures can create barriers for participants. As examples, multi-factor logins and short time windows to respond to the NDIA may be especially difficult for people with cognitive disability or executive-function challenges. RAC members also said the NDIA and NDIS Commission must exercise great caution and control with new information-sharing powers, given the amount of deeply personal information held by them (particularly in behaviour support records). Members also raised concerns about boundaries for NDIS plan nominees and how the system checks whether a nominee’s decisions reflect the participant’s wishes. Members said safeguarding rules must be matched with better communication and training for both participants and providers.

A large part of the meeting focused on the support needs assessment and the new funding calculation. The NDIA outlined its testing work, including anonymised desktop assessments, volunteer, real-world testing with current participants, and independent external actuarial review. Members were very clear that people must be able to see their full assessment report (including scores) as well as how their assessment leads to their budget. There must be no hidden formulas or unexplained numbers.

Members said that New Framework Plan processes must not duplicate or carry over the clear inequities of the current planning approach, especially for autistic people, people with psychosocial disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people in remote areas. RAC members strongly supported having a human check if someone’s new budget is very different from their current one, especially for people with high support needs or without informal supports. Members said that a more agile NDIA must be able to fix problems quickly, rather than waiting months for formal rule changes. The changes arising from the shift from ‘line by line’ budget-setting to whole-budget setting must not reduce a participants’ rights to internal and external appeal.

State representatives spoke about the practical challenges of implementing Thriving Kids, noting tight timelines but confirming that work is already underway. Members also raised concerns about the recent autism strategy grants, particularly for remote communities.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, 13 March 2026 and will include a deep dive session into NDIS Supports.