

# Independent Advisory Council to the NDIS Annual Report 2019–2020



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# Principal Member's review



It is my pleasure to present the 2019-2020 Annual Report of the Independent Advisory Council (Council) to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This report outlines the important advice and progress Council has made throughout 2019-2020, to make the Scheme easier for participants and families to achieve their goals, as well as key details about Council's function and membership.

Above: Portrait of John Walsh AM, Principal Member of the Independent Advisory Council to the NDIS.

During this past year, from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, Council and its dedicated Members, Expert Advisers and Reference Groups have been unwavering in their commitment to deliver independent advice to the Board of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), as required by Section 144 of the NDIS Act.

More than ever, Council's advice and insight – drawing on the extensive skill, lived experience and knowledge of Members and Expert Advisers – has been trusted to increase the NDIA's awareness of issues as they arise, so that concerns are understood and resolved collaboratively and promptly, enhancing the delivery of the NDIS.

Highlights of Council's work this year included advice to the Board on plan flexibility for value for money, support for decision making, participants who are parents, and best practice in early childhood intervention. A wealth of other topics were less formally discussed with management and Board Members, often drawing on the library of papers developed by Council over previous years.

During the year we also launched a new Operating Model and Communications Strategy, to enhance the way we work, and also to raise the ability of the Council to engage more fully and directly with people with disability and their families and communities.

Council received regular briefings from NDIA staff as they developed advice, and we were particularly pleased to see the introduction of aspects of the Tune Review, and the Participant Vision and Participant Service Guarantee.

In order to allow continued best functioning during limitations on face-to-face meeting due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Council moved to more frequent remote meetings, where Members connected through assistive technologies, demonstrating their resilience to work through continuous change. During this time Council's advice to the NDIA has been particularly important to the delivery of services to our participants, and maintenance of their safety.

While much has been achieved by Council, we know more needs to be done to make dealing with the Scheme easier for participants and families, and to

ensure participants are realising the benefits of this visionary social reform.

We are committed to continuing strong engagement with the NDIA Board, Reference Groups, providers and the sector, and continuing with our established working arrangements with various groups and stakeholders, to enhance our advice.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the NDIA Board, Council colleagues and Reference Groups for their significant contribution to the achievements of the Council to the NDIS over the past year.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge The Hon. Stuart Robert MP, Minister for the NDIS, who attended the Council's November 2019 meeting, seeking advice on a number of NDIS issues. I've also appreciated the significant support from Dr Helen Nugent AO, Chair of the NDIA Board, and Mr Martin Hoffman, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the NDIA. I am truly grateful to both Helen and Martin for their energy and passion shown in working with us to deliver Council's advice. Moreover, at various times during the year Council meetings and/or its Reference Group discussions have been attended by Board Members Estelle Pearson, Jane Burns, Robyn Kruk AO, Glenn Keys AO, Martin Laverty and Jim Minto.

Sadly, during the writing of this report, Council learned of the passing of Ms Sue Salthouse, a highly respected member and disability advocate whom I had the great privilege to work with. Sue's contribution, incredible depth of commitment, insight and lived experience will forever be remembered and missed by Council colleagues and the NDIA.

Finally, it has been my honour to serve as Principal Member of Council, knowing that our collective collaboration and engagement has influenced the important changes needed to get the Scheme right for participants and make a difference in their lives.



*John Walsh AM  
Principal Member  
Independent Advisory Council to the NDIS*



# About Council's important role

The Council provides the NDIA Board with independent advice on the delivery of the Scheme, which the Board must consider when performing its duties.

Council is formally appointed by the Minister for the NDIS and composed of people with disability, service providers and carers, representing the crucial perspective of these stakeholders to the work of the Agency and the design of the Scheme.

Simply put, Council was established to bring the views of people with disability, carers and sector experts to the heart of the NDIS.

The term of the inaugural Council expired on 30 June 2017, and the three-year term of the second Council expired on 30 June 2020. The membership of the second Council included:

- Mr John Walsh AM (Principal Member)
- Professor Anne Kavanagh
- Mr James Manders
- Ms Janet Meagher AM
- Ms Jennifer Cullen
- Mrs Judy Huett
- Ms Kerry Allan-Zinner
- Mr Kevin Cocks AM
- Ms Leah van Poppel
- Ms Liz Reid AM
- Ms Sue Salthouse
- Ms Sylvana Mahmic.

The Council was supplemented by five Expert Advisers, representing key national peak bodies:

- Ms Ara Cresswell, Carers Australia
- Dr Ben Gauntlett, Disability Discrimination Commissioner
- Mr David Moody, National Disability Services
- Ms Jane Flanagan, Disabled People's Organisations Australia (Ms Flanagan replaced Ms Therese Sands, Disabled People's Organisations Australia)
- Mr Ross Joyce, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations.

Council established three Reference Groups to help inform their advice:

- Intellectual Disability Reference Group (IDRG), which provides advice on best practice in empowering people with intellectual disability to lead ordinary lives and be included in their community.
- Self-Management Reference Group (SMRG), which provides advice relating to self-management and what is needed to promote and support the growth in an efficient, effective, low risk and sustainable manner.
- Contemporary & Innovative Approaches Reference Group (CIARG), which provides advice relating to the home and living supports for people with disability. Also provides advice on best practice innovation models that contribute to the NDIS principles, including financial sustainability.

# Council Members

**“It is important to be on the Council and represent people with intellectual disabilities, so we are heard. It’s good to feedback to the Council and IDRГ about issues that affect people with disabilities, especially advocating for those people trying to access the NDIS and the difficulties that they face with the NDIS.”**

— Mrs Judy Huett, Council Member.



## **Mr John Walsh AM (Principal Member)**

Mr John Walsh AM is one of Australia’s leading actuaries. He is a retired Partner of PriceWaterhouseCoopers, where he worked for over 20 years in the areas of social policy and funding across accident compensation, health and disability. He has personal experience of disability, having lived with quadriplegia following a rugby league accident in his early-twenties.

Mr Walsh has served on the NDIA Board since the establishment of the NDIS in 2013, recently stepping down from the role in August 2020. His previous work as Associate Commissioner to the Productivity Commission significantly contributed to the original guiding principles that recommended a National Disability Insurance Scheme in 2011.

Mr Walsh has served as Principal Member of the Council since April 2019.

An Adjunct Professor, by appointment from the University of Sydney, Mr Walsh has also served as a Board member of the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Healthcare.



## Professor Anne Kavanagh

Professor Anne Kavanagh is an internationally renowned scholar in the field of health inequalities with specific expertise in disability, gender, the built environment and employment.

She serves as:

- Chair Disability and Health – University of Melbourne.
- Chair Melbourne School of Population and Global Health – University of Melbourne
- Head – NHMRC funded Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health (CRE-DH)
- Academic Director – Melbourne Disability Institute
- Member – Victorian Disability Advisory Council
- Member – Brotherhood of St Laurence/NDIA Partnerships committee.

Professor Kavanagh's research shows that many health problems experienced by people with disability are due to unemployment, housing stress, discrimination and poverty. Her team is looking at how policies that reduce disadvantage among people with disability could improve their health and wellbeing.

Professor Kavanagh was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2011 and is the mother of two children – one of whom is autistic and has an intellectual disability – and is committed to bringing together her academic expertise and her personal experience to improve the lives of people with disability and their families.



## Mr James Manders

Mr James Manders is a former investment banker with over two decades' experience in leadership roles across global financial markets. He currently holds a number of advisory roles on company Boards, working overseas as an Independent Director with a focus on governance and regulatory investments.

Mr Manders has leveraged his position in the financial services industry to increase awareness of the needs of people with disability in the workplace, advocating around diversity, inclusion and employment. He has a unique view on how society embraces the challenge of tolerance and acceptance, having lived experience of disability, with a hearing impairment and gradual loss of vision.

Taking a leadership role in digital community media that aims to transform how the disability sector engages in tailored content, Mr Manders currently serves as Member for both the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Disability Advisory Council for Elections ACT.

He has previously served as:

- Council Member – Retina Australia ACT
- Member – ACT Brumbies Commercial Services Advisory Group
- Vice President – Radio 1RPH
- Board Member – Blind Citizens Australia.



## Ms Janet Meagher AM

Ms Janet Meagher AM is a pioneer in the mental health sector and has served as a founding member of numerous mental health organisations. A teacher and librarian by profession, she has used her lived experience of disability, and institutionalisation with schizophrenia, dedicating her career to mental health activism and advocacy.

Over almost four decades of work, Ms Meagher has served on Ministerial and national advisory bodies in health, mental health, suicide prevention and disability including as:

- Mental Health Commissioner – National Mental Health Commission
- Foundation co-Chairperson – Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum
- Board Member – World Federation for Mental Health
- General Manager – Richmond PRA (now Flourish Australia)
- Member – National People with Disabilities and Carer Advisory Council.

Ms Meagher was honoured as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1996 and a Churchill Fellow in 1994. Her work into consumer empowerment and self advocacy was published in the book 'Partnership or Pretence'.

Ms Meagher was a member of the first Council from 2013-2017, and was reappointed for a second term in July 2017.



## Ms Jennifer Cullen

Ms Jennifer Cullen is an Adjunct Associate Professor and community services professional with over 28 years' experience working in disability and aged care services. She is Chief Executive Officer of Synapse, leading a range of research projects that support Indigenous Australians with complex neurocognitive disability. Additionally, Ms Cullen serves as non-executive Director, MJD Foundation.

A descendent of the Bidjara and Wakka Wakka people, Ms Cullen has broad networks with Indigenous communities across Queensland and other parts of Australia.

She is committed to rural and remote disability service delivery, and enhancing service innovation and delivery for people with disabilities and their families.

Ms Cullen has served as Member, National Disability Carers Advisory Council.

**“As part of my role as Member of Council, I ensure people experiencing severe and complex disabilities are truly supported to make their own decisions and have those decisions actioned on the basis of individual choice.”**

— Ms Kerry Allan-Zinner, Council Member.





## Mrs Judy Huett

Mrs Judy Huett is a highly respected national and international advocate committed to promoting the human rights of people with intellectual disability. She currently works in capacity building and self-advocacy support for Speak Out Association, and is a founding Member of the Council's Intellectual Disability Reference Group (IDRG). Mrs Huett is a Member of the Disability Strategic Engagement Group supporting the work of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of people with Disability.

She was the first person with an intellectual disability to co-lead the 2019 Australian delegation presenting to the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), a body that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

With qualifications in disability support and aged care, she has served as:

- Chair – Our Voice Committee (focused zero tolerance and employment)
- Board Member – Inclusion Australia
- Member – Tasmanian Premier's Disability Advisory Council (PDAC).

Mrs Huett was awarded 2010 Tasmanian Disability Community Achievement Award and 2012 Individual Award for Human Rights.



## Ms Kerry Allan-Zinner

Ms Kerry Allan-Zinner is a highly regarded leader and mentor within the West Australian disability sector, enjoying a rewarding career promoting disability awareness and supporting people's human rights.

As well as her work on Council, she currently serves as Chair, Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability, where she delivers independent advice to the Western Australian Minister for Disability Services, informing on barriers that people with disability, their families and carers face to live independent lives.

Born with cerebral palsy, Ms Allan-Zinner has actively contributed to the enhancement of the NDIS, upholding the choice, dignity and rights of all Australians living with disability. She has additionally served as:

- Liaison Officer – Ability Centre Australasia
- Chair – Cerebral Palsy Association of Western Australia
- Disability awareness consultant.



## Mr Kevin Cocks AM

Mr Kevin Cocks AM is a highly respected human rights and disability advocate, who is currently Executive General Manager of the Accessible Transport Network for the Queensland Government's Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Mr Cocks holds a Master of Social Welfare from the University of Queensland and has previously served as Commissioner, Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, and Director, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated.

Mr Cocks was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2010, for promoting human rights for people with disability. Other standout awards include:

- Australian Human Rights Medal (2005) – The Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC)
- Humanities and Human Services Outstanding Alumni Award (2003) – Queensland University of Technology
- Centenary Medal (2003).



## Ms Leah van Poppel

Ms Leah van Poppel is a woman with disability who is highly respected for her collaborative leadership, governance and policy development across disability rights, working at state and national levels over the last decade.

She is Chief Executive Officer of Women with Disabilities Victoria, applying a gender lens to advocate and advance the social and economic inclusion for women with disabilities in the state. Ms van Poppel works to empower marginalised women in the community through education and mentoring, as well as research, policy advice and government advocacy.

Additionally, Ms van Poppel is a Board Member for Victorian peak body organisations Domestic Violence Victoria and Gender Equity Victoria (GEN VIC).

Ms van Poppel holds a Bachelor of Arts and extensive industry networks having served as:

- Chair – National Disability and Carer Alliance
- CEO – Blind Citizens Australia
- Manager – Youth Disability Advocacy Service (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria)
- Manager – Disability Loop Project, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)
- Readiness Coordinator – AFDO.



## Ms Liz Reid AM

Ms Liz Reid AM has over 25 years' experience in the community, disability and social justice sectors. She has dedicated her career to assisting others seek equitable economic and social opportunities to participate fully in their communities.

Currently, Ms Reid is the Executive Officer of YouthWorX NT, a not for profit organisation committed to supporting Territorians in their lifelong social, economic and career success. She is responsible for the management of programs that include life and career coaching, and services that support employment.

Ms Reid serves as:

- President – Physical Disability Australia (PDA)
- President – Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) Board
- Member – City of Darwin, Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee.

She was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2020, for her service to people with disability, youth and social inclusion.



Image courtesy: Jamila Toderas

## Ms Sue Salthouse (1949-2020)

Ms Sue Salthouse has worked in the areas of social justice and human rights from 1996, up until her passing in July 2020. A highly respected and passionate advocate for people with disability, she was committed to educating the community about the impact disability has on people's lives and contributed to the design, delivery and improvement of the NDIS in so many ways.

Throughout her career, she was particularly concerned about how the intersecting issues of gender and disability discrimination affect women with disability. Ms Salthouse served as:

- Chair – Women with Disabilities ACT
- Director – Women in Adult and Vocational Education (WAVE) and Rights & Inclusion Australia
- Chair – Advance Personnel (Disability Employment Service)
- ACT representative – COAG Advisory Panel (2015-16)
- Member Governing Council – University of Canberra
- Chair – ACT Disability Reference Group.

Ms Salthouse was announced as the ACT Senior Woman of the Year 2014, a finalist in Australian of the year in 2015, and was the 2015-16 ACT Citizen of the Year.

A friend of the Agency, she will be missed by those who had the privilege to work with her.



## Ms Sylvana Mahmic

Ms Sylvana Mahmic is an early childhood intervention and self-management advocate with over 20 years' experience working to achieve greater independence and a better life for children with disability and their families. She is the Chief Executive Officer of Plumtree, a not for profit organisation that empowers families of young children, birth to eight years old with developmental delay or disability, to support their child to have a full life in the community.

While raising a son who has cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability (he has been utilising NDIS self-managed funding since 2009), Ms Mahmic has served on over 20 reference and advisory groups, including several Ministerial appointments.

She currently serves as:

- Member Access Advisory Group – NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Member Multicultural Advisory Group – NSW Family and Community Services
- Carers Advisory Group Member – NSW Family and Community Services.

Ms Mahmic was awarded 2017 Citizen of the Year Inner West Council and the 2019 Trevor Parmenter Achievement Award, for her contribution to education. She has developed several initiatives in whole-of-family and community-based approaches to early childhood intervention, with particular expertise in targeting culturally and linguistically diverse communities. She is currently undertaking postgraduate studies.

**“As a member of the Independent Advisory Council I am privileged to contribute my personal experience as a culturally diverse mother of a young man who has a disability, as well as my professional experience in early childhood intervention, so that the NDIS continues to evolve to meet the needs of Australians.”**

**— Ms Sylvana Mahmic, Council Member.**

# Expert Advisers



Image courtesy: healthvoices.org.au

## Ms Ara Cresswell

Ms Ara Cresswell has an extensive history as an executive in the not for profit sector both at the local and national levels. She served as Chief Executive Officer of Carers Australia, from September 2011 until November 2019, and believes that taking care of carers is paramount given that each of us is likely to either be or need a carer in our lifetime.

Ms Cresswell is a nurse and social trainer, with qualifications from the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and has served as:

- Chief Executive Officer – ACT Council of Social Service
- Chief Executive Officer – Homelessness Australia
- Acting Chief Executive Officer – Reconciliation Australia.



## Dr Ben Gauntlett

Dr Ben Gauntlett was appointed as the Disability Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission in 2019, working to remove barriers for people with disability and ensuring respect for their human rights and participation in society.

As Commissioner, he has presented at both the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and United Nations Conference of State Parties, and was a witness before the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Dr Gauntlett is a quadriplegic following a schoolboy rugby union accident aged 16 in Perth, Western Australia. He has the experience of a person living with a disability and accessing care in Australia, the United Kingdom and United States of America.

He has worked as a barrister, an associate to the Honourable Justice Kenneth Hayne AC at the High Court of Australia, and Counsel Assisting the Solicitor-General of the Commonwealth.

Dr Gauntlett has taught law in Australia and UK, and holds degrees in Law (Honours) and Commerce, a Master of Laws, and a Doctorate of Philosophy (Law). He was awarded the 2003 Rhodes Scholarship for Western Australia.





### Mr David Moody

Mr David Moody is passionate about social justice and has vast experience working in the public sector. He is the Chief Executive Officer of National Disability Services, with comprehensive understanding of the NDIS and a deep commitment to the ideals of the sector.

He has been a lawyer and former partner with Slater and Gordon, and previously served as:

- Director Strategic Policy – Worksafe
- Director Budget Strategy and Corporate Planning – Department of Human Health and Services
- NDIS Secretariat Assistant Director – Department of Premier & Cabinet Victoria.



### Ms Jane Flanagan

Ms Jane Flanagan advocates nationally for the human rights of people with disability from migrant and refugee backgrounds. She is the National Manager of Systemic Advocacy at National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA), working as part of the Disabled People's Organisations Australia (DPO Australia).

Ms Flanagan serves as:

- Member – Australian Anthropological Society (AAS)
- Founding Member & Representative – DPO Australia.

She has qualifications in Disability Studies (Certificate III & IV), as well as a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Southern Queensland and Master of Arts from The Australian National University.



### Mr Ross Joyce

Mr Ross Joyce has substantial experience across a number of diverse sectors and is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO), a federated member organisation which is a national peak body representing disability specific and disability representative national peaks.

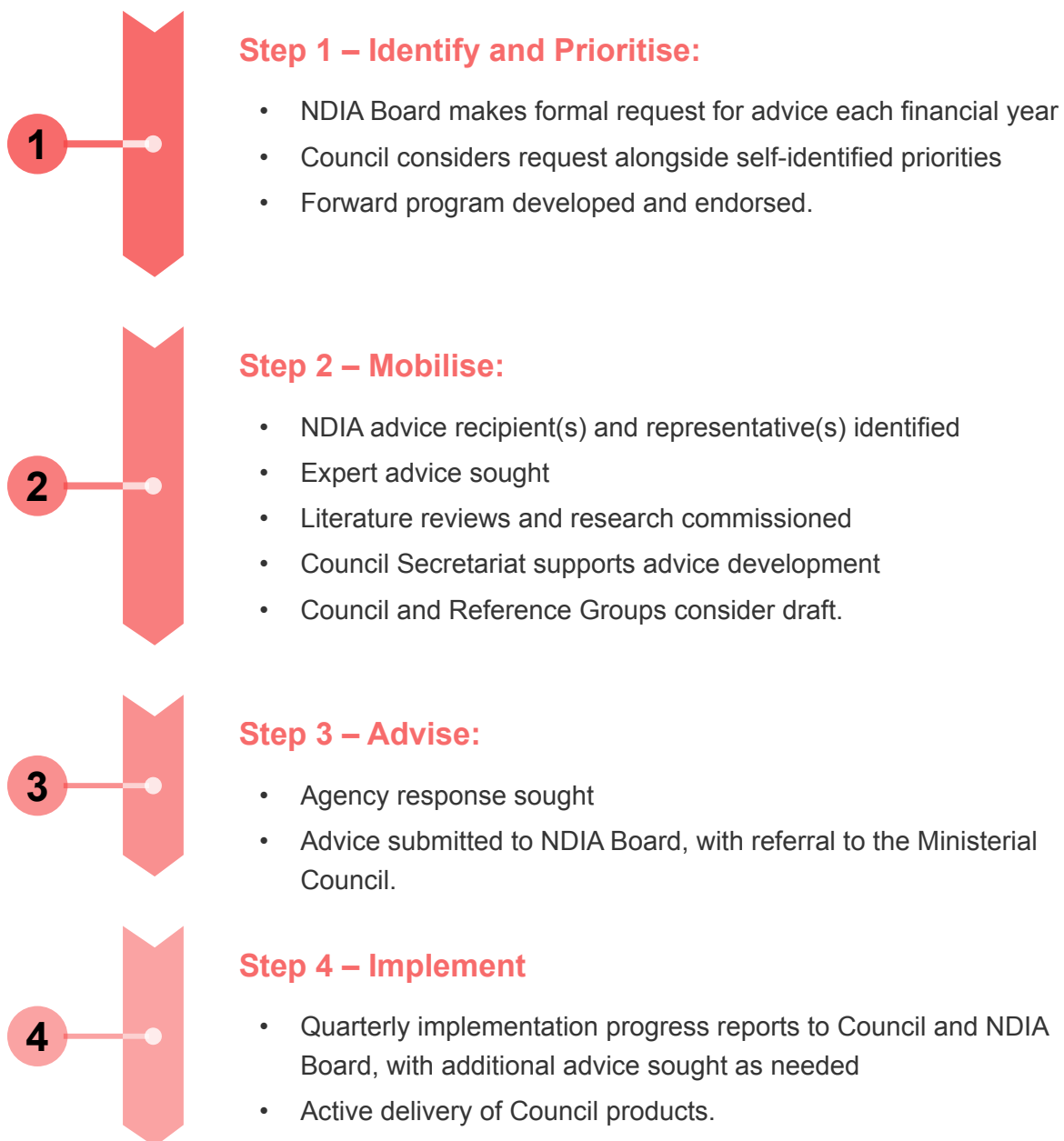
Mr Joyce holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Management and has served as:

- Co-Founder/Executive Director – UrCommunity
- Principal/Founder – Verve Empowering Solutions
- Director – annecto
- Chief Executive Officer – PivotWest
- Chief Executive Officer – Macedon Ranges & North Western Melbourne Medicare Local
- Chief Executive Officer – Hume-Moonee Valley Regional Library Corporation.

# Operating Model

During 2019, Council updated its Operating Model to optimise Council's role and the expertise of its Members in delivering a world leading NDIS, better aligning and integrating the work of Council within the Agency.

## Independent Advisory Council Operating Model



Above: Diagram showing end-to-end process of the Independent Advisory Council Operating Model.

## Independent Advisory Council Operating Model (continued)

Council's previous approach focused mostly on the development of papers and submissions. Because of this there was little consideration of the pre-advice stage, including problem identification or what Council should advise on, and the post-advice stage, including actionable change or the role Council can play to influence change.

The new Operating Model is made up of four key steps that include a sharper focus on providing pre- and post-advice. This will enable stronger alignment to corporate processes, so that the NDIA Board and Council can develop a shared view of issues to be addressed while maintaining Council's independence in self-identifying priorities. Additionally, it will help turn Council's advice into solid work programs, further supporting NDIA's business areas with advice implementation.

### Step 1 – Identify and prioritise:

- The NDIA Board makes a formal request to Council for advice within the forthcoming financial year
- Council considers the request alongside its self-identified priorities
- A work plan is developed and endorsed by Council, who confirm the agreed areas of focus with the NDIA Board. This includes timelines for advice and a further assessment of any specific support requirements for the work plan.

### Step 2 – Mobilise:

- NDIA representation is identified, including recipient business area(s) for the advice. Formal invitations for advice are issued
- Research, literature reviews and think pieces are commissioned, with input sought from the broader community
- Development of the advice is supported by the NDIA's Council secretariat team and independent consultant
- Council and its Reference Groups consider advice proposals/drafts.

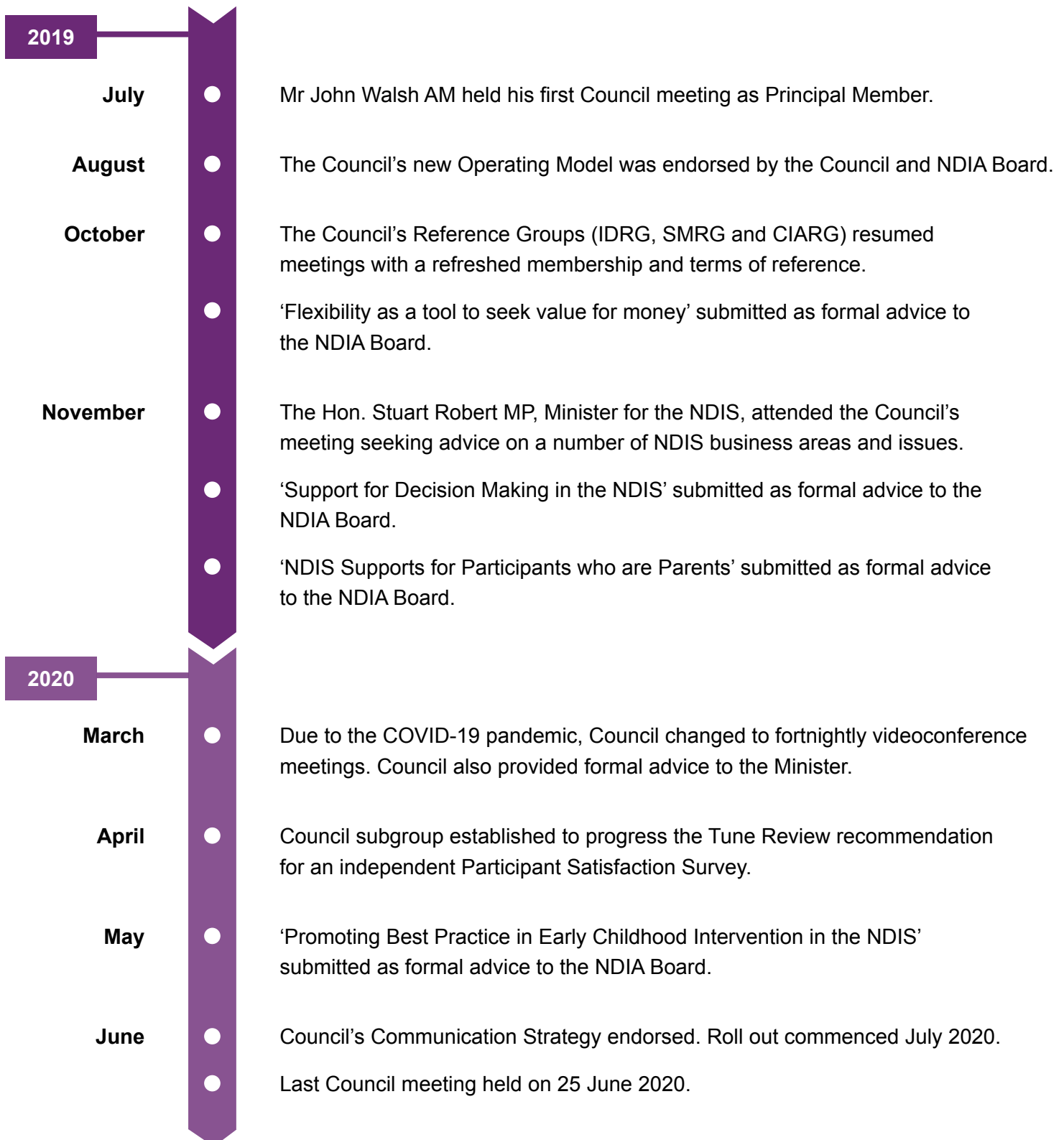
### Step 3 – Advise:

- To prepare for Board submission, alongside Council's advice, an Agency (management) response is prepared by the identified NDIA representatives
- The Board deliberate and endorse the advice and Agency response
- The advice, and any actions planned in response, is submitted to the Ministerial Council and the Minister for the NDIS.

### Step 4 – Implement:

- Work plan and advice progression is reported quarterly to Council and Board, with any additional implementation advice sought
- Council products are finalised and shared to the Agency and wider community, through [www.ndis-iac.com.au](http://www.ndis-iac.com.au).

# Council's year in review 2019–2020



Above: Timeline graphic that shows key Council highlights and achievements for the financial year, 2019 to 2020.

# Council's advice

## About Council's advice

The Council's independence is outlined in the NDIS Act 2013, in which it is determined that Council will provide advice of its own initiative or at the written request of the Board. Advice is given in relation to the ways in which the Agency:

- Performs its functions in relation to the Scheme
- Supports the independence and social and economic participation of people with disability
- Provides reasonable and necessary supports, including early intervention supports, for participants in the Scheme launch
- Enables people with disability to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports
- Facilitates the development of a nationally consistent approach to the access to, and the planning and funding of, supports for people with disability
- Promotes the provision of high quality and innovative supports to people with disability

- Raises community awareness of the issues that affect the social and economic participation of people with disability, and helps with greater community inclusion of people with disability.

To support the development of advice, the Council has established Reference Groups that provide advice to Council at their own discretion or at Council's request. The advice from the Reference Groups informs the Council, who may decide to progress it to the NDIA Board.

The Council can provide formal or informal advice, for example:

- Formal advice to the Board in line with section 144(1) of the NDIS Act 2013, which states that the NDIA Board must consider the advice provided and inform the Disability Reform Council when this advice has been utilised; or
- Informal advice to the Board and/or NDIA business units, which allows timely engagement of the NDIA with Council.



Above: Image of Ms Sylvana Mahmic, Independent Advisory Council Member, speaking into microphone at meeting.



## Formal advice submitted for 2019–2020

Over the past 12 months, Council has submitted comprehensive formal advice to the Board on a number of areas related to priority Council issues, cutting across a range of 2019-2023 [Corporate Plan](#) aspirations.

These aspirations include:

- A quality experience and outcomes for participants
- A competitive market with innovative supports
- A connected and engaged stakeholder sector
- A financially sustainable Scheme
- A high-performing NDIA.

This year's formal advice included:

- [Flexibility as a tool to seek value for money.](#) This advice explores the role of flexibility in enabling NDIS participants to seek value for money. The advice identifies existing NDIA practices that lead to value for money, and what else is required to assist participants to seek value for money. It also examines risks, perverse incentives and mitigation strategies associated with flexibility, providing recommendations for the way forward for the NDIA.

- [Support for decision making in the NDIS.](#) Taking advice from the IDRG, the Council identified the need for the NDIS to develop and implement a formal, consistent approach for decision making supports. To this end, Council advised on the framework and approach needed for the provision of best practice decision making supports. This advice includes specific recommendations according to stage of life and type of disability.
- [NDIS supports for participants who are parents.](#) This advice aims to inform the role of the NDIS in supporting participants who are parents. The advice is informed by insights from research and case studies and aims for participants who are parents to achieve their goals and develop resilient families.
- [Promoting best practice in early childhood intervention in the NDIS.](#) This advice identifies challenges in the implementation of the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) approach. It draws on actuarial analysis, research and the expert opinion needed to refocus the ECEI pathway of the NDIS. This advice aims for effective support for decision making, promoting a best practice family-centred approach.



Above left: Image of Mr James Manders, Independent Advisory Council Member, at a Council meeting. Above right: Image of Ms Jennifer Cullen, Independent Advisory Council Member, in discussion at a Council meeting.

## Informal advice submitted for 2019–2020

Over the past 12 months, Council has submitted an extensive suite of informal advice to the NDIA that aims to cut across a range of 2019-2023 [Corporate Plan](#) aspirations.

Council's informal advice is submitted to the NDIA Board for discussion, and/or provided to NDIA management at Council meetings or as part of out-of-session subgroups. These subgroups have been established to progress specific work programs with Council's input.

This year's collection of informal advice is grouped by theme in the table below:

Informal advice theme	Informal advice title
Psychosocial disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDIS approach to outreach and episodic models</li> </ul>
Price Guide and Support Catalogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts of Price Guide on promoting innovation</li> <li>• Advice on early engagement with providers to allow time to apply any changes</li> </ul>
Home and living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported Independent Living (SIL) review and mitigation strategies</li> <li>• Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) innovation plan and design standards</li> <li>• Individual Living Options (ILO) project</li> <li>• <a href="#">Discussion paper: Challenges in housing and supports</a></li> <li>• Separation of housing and supports</li> </ul>
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Discussion paper: Capacity building insights from NDIA data</a></li> </ul>
Markets and providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges for participants and nominees with service agreements</li> <li>• Workforce development</li> <li>• Regional and remote markets strategy</li> <li>• Support coordination: role and responsibilities, conflicts of interest and specialisation</li> </ul>
Research and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the NDIA research and evaluation strategy to promote participant's inclusion in research</li> <li>• Decision support tools – research considerations</li> <li>• Evidence repositories proposals</li> <li>• Social and community participation research proposals</li> <li>• Research advisory panel – role and identification of members</li> </ul>
Assistive Technology (AT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy around provision of AT supports</li> </ul>

## Informal advice table (continued)

Informal advice theme	Informal advice title
Scheme sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurance support program</li> <li>• Independent Assessment Pilot</li> <li>• Scheme sustainability and financial trajectory</li> </ul>
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences from the community and feedback on the NDIA response</li> </ul>
NDIA Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan 2020–2024</li> <li>• Participant Service Improvement Plan 2020–2021</li> <li>• Participant Service Charter</li> </ul>
NDIS Identification (ID) Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing paper: NDIS Identification (ID) Card – issues and considerations</li> </ul>
Participant engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant Reference Group engagement models</li> <li>• Council’s communications strategy as a way to promote participant engagement and consultation</li> </ul>
Operational issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complexity of NDIA processes</li> <li>• Operational guidelines and practice guidance review</li> <li>• Complex and exceptionally complex needs pathways – issues to resolve</li> <li>• SIL quotes</li> </ul>
National Disability Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and implementation of the new Strategy</li> <li>• Learnings from previous National Disability Strategy 2010–2020</li> </ul>
Self-management (advice supported by the SMRG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant’s risk assessment tool as a way of promoting self-management</li> <li>• Participant portal improvements and development of a participant’s mobile app</li> <li>• Self-management Strategy</li> </ul>
Contemporary and innovative approaches (advice supported by the CIARG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home and Living Strategy</li> <li>• Contemporary and Innovative Approaches Strategy</li> </ul>

## Informal advice table (continued)

Informal advice theme	Informal advice title
Intellectual disability (advice supported by the IDRG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges for NDIS participants with intellectual disability</li> <li>• Workforce capability and training</li> <li>• Support for decision making and the role of guardians and nominees</li> <li>• Easy read and accessibility of information for participants with intellectual disability</li> </ul>
Partners in the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Area Coordination (LAC) Partner Strategy, strengthening policy and practice</li> </ul>
Tune Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues for consideration</li> <li>• Participant Satisfaction Survey</li> </ul>

“Since my appointment as Chief Executive Officer of the NDIA in November 2019, I have found the Council’s collective advice and insight of great importance. Their work assists the NDIA to address and resolve specific issues, while continuing to move towards ensuring that people with disability are included in every part of social and economic life, alongside every Australian, as fully participating citizens.”

— Mr Martin Hoffman, Chief Executive Officer, NDIA.



**Independent  
Advisory  
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to the **ndis**

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