

Independent Advisory Council News Bulletin 16 June 2021

The Independent Advisory Council (Council) to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) brings the participant's voice to the heart of the NDIS. The Council gives independent advice to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Board, as part of the *NDIS Act 2013*.

Scheme Reform Forum, held 10 and 11 June

Last week in Sydney, Council Members, members from across the disability community, NDIA Board members and staff attended a Scheme Reform Forum. They talked about:

- the main functions of the NDIS, as set out in the Productivity Commission review and *NDIS Act 2013*;
- current challenges facing the Scheme, including sustainability pressures and problems with the current planning process;
- the importance of the National Disability Strategy and support for information, linkages and capacity building;
- changes to NDIS access and planning, including Independent Assessments (IA), and how to work well together on these issues in the future; and
- advising the NDIA Board and Minister for the NDIS on how to do Scheme reforms well, rebuild trust with the disability community, and ensure that reforms are guided by the participant experience.

The Forum will help Council draft advice, which will include recommendations for improvements to the proposed NDIS access and planning reforms, including IA, to help address sector concerns. This advice has been directly sought by the NDIS Board and Minister for the NDIS.

The Forum was run by an independent organisation called [ThinkPlace](#).

From Council's Deputy Chair

Leah Van Poppel, Council's Deputy Chair, thanked everyone who attended the Forum for their time, their honesty and expertise. She noted all their work to find solutions on the complex Scheme reform issues.

She recognised that the next round of consultations will help Council hear other views from the disability community, and that expert community input will help to shape Council's work and advice to the NDIA Board and Minister.

Ms Van Poppel said that these consultations were difficult for many Members and reminded everyone that rebuilding trust means having honest conversations and being able to speak openly, respectfully, and plainly. She said that this does not mean having to agree on everything.

From NDIA Board and CEO

Dr Helen Nugent AO, NDIA Board Chair, recognised Council's commitment to the NDIS and the different views Members bring to Scheme reforms. She agreed with Council about the need for genuine engagement, saying that it will help the NDIA Board and NDIA:

- get a good understanding of the challenges for the NDIS;
- understand what issues matter to Council and the disability community.

Martin Hoffman, NDIA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), said the NDIA is committed to greater transparency and sharing information with the community. He committed to providing more information in the future about:

- the sustainability pressures facing the Scheme
- how IA will be used to develop a participants personalised budget.

Next steps

The Agency committed to:

- acting on Council's feedback on how to rebuild trust with people with disability and the disability community, including greater transparency about the problems facing the Scheme
- working in partnership with Council on the short- and long-term priorities identified through the consultations; and
- incorporating Council's feedback and advice into the future design of Scheme reforms.

To help Council hear from different voices within the disability community, the NDIA is organising consultations with:

- State and Territories,
- Disability Representative Organisations, via the NDIA's CEO Forum; and
- NDIA's Participant Reference Group.

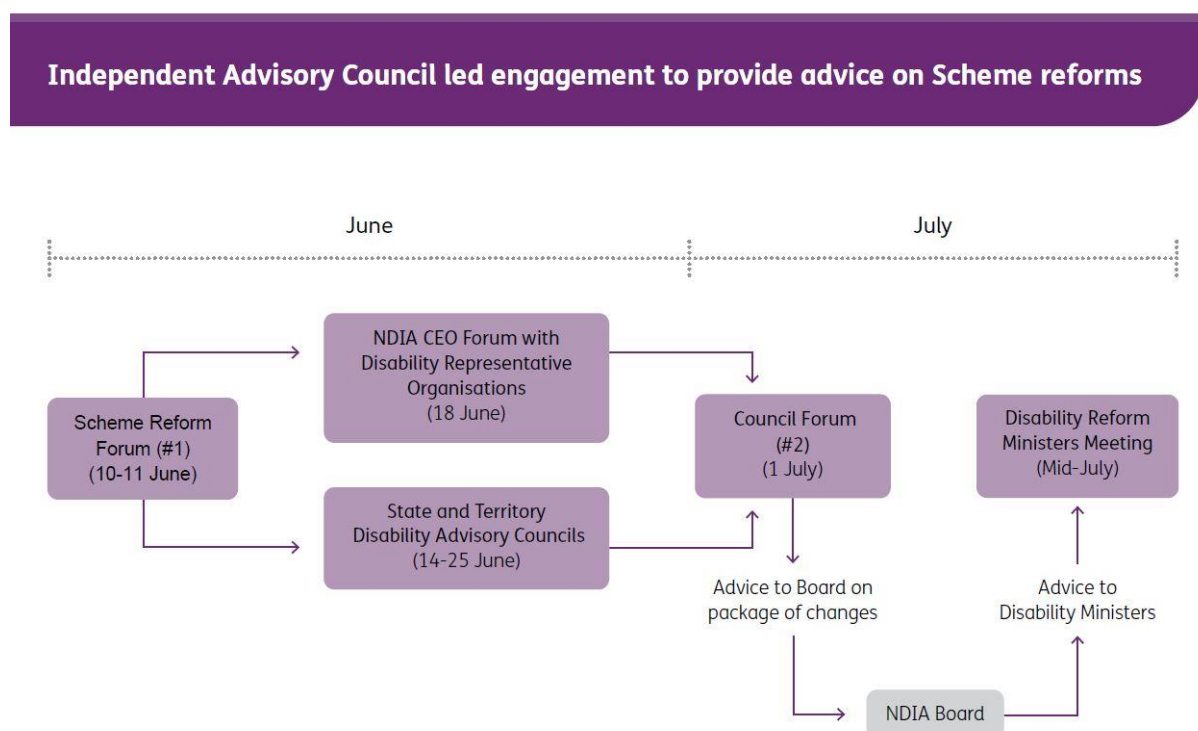
All Council Members have been invited to attend these additional consultations, which will happen throughout June.

The aim of these consultations is to:

- get feedback on the Scheme Reform Forum, including priorities identified by Council
- seek views on the short-term advice being considered by Council; and
- seek ideas for rebuilding trust with the disability community.

Once consultations finish, Council will send advice to the NDIA Board and Minister on Scheme reforms. The nature of this advice will be published on [Council's external website](#).

The process diagram below shows how Council will provide advice on Scheme reforms:



Above: Process diagram that shows how Council will provide advice on Scheme reforms.

The table below shows key dates for Council consultation on Scheme reforms:

Date	Engagement
10-11 June	Scheme Reform Forum
18 June	NDIA CEO Forum with Disability Representative Organisations
14-25 June	State and Territory Disability Advisory Councils
1 July	Council Forum (#2)
Between 1 July and Mid-July	Council Forum (#2) gives advice to NDIA Board on package of changes
Between 1 July and Mid-July	NDIA Board gives advice to Disability Ministers
Mid-July	Disability Reform Ministers Meeting

Above: The table above shows key dates for Council consultation on Scheme reforms.

More information

Council welcomes feedback [through the Council Secretariat](#).