

Disability Representative Organisations call for clear and complete consultation on NDIS planning reforms

Joint Statement by Disability Representative Organisations

6 March 2026



The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing is currently consulting on the New Framework Planning Rules and asking the public to provide submissions on the reform architecture while specifics of critical components remain unavailable or lacking detail. This prevents Disability Representative Organisations (DROs) and the broader disability community from providing fully informed feedback and undermines the integrity of the consultation process.

Key elements necessary to properly assess the proposed reforms have not yet been released or explained. These include:

- Exposure drafts of relevant legislative instruments.
- How the Support Needs Assessment has been validated, including accessibility and cultural and linguistic bias testing.
- Sample reports and clarification of assumptions regarding informal supports.
- Clear explanation of how assessed need will translate into funding outcomes, including whether automated or algorithmic decision-making will be used.

- Details of review processes and appeal rights.
- Confirmation that full merits review through the Administrative Review Tribunal will remain accessible and effective.
- Safeguards to prevent inequity during transition.
- Clarity regarding the staged rollout cohorts and timelines.

The Government has articulated principles of transparency, meaningful engagement, consultation and co-design. These principles, and Australia's human rights obligations, must now be reflected in action through cross-agency coordination, open communication, and collaborative decision making with representatives of the disability community.

New Framework Planning must only proceed to rollout once complete information about the reform architecture has been released, and thorough, genuine, and complete consultation has occurred. Proceeding in the absence of this, risks undermining confidence in the reform and its legitimacy, as well as potentially jeopardising the lives, safety and dignity of people with disability on the Scheme.

To ensure consultation is genuine, informed and consistent with the Government's stated principles of transparency, meaningful engagement and co-design, **Disability Representative Organisations call on the Government to:**

- **Confirm publicly which, if any, of the outstanding reform materials are still under development** and commit to appropriate future consultation and direct engagement with DROs on these outstanding materials.
- **Provide clear timelines for the release of outstanding information**, including clear communications around what, when and how the disability community and representative organisations will have the opportunity to influence design and decision making.
- **Release all outstanding reform materials**, including exposure drafts of legislative instruments and operational policy documents.
- **Publish the methodology and validation evidence for the Support Needs Assessment**, including accessibility testing, cultural and linguistic bias testing, and sample outputs.
- **Publish the outcomes of the various desktop reviews and evaluative processes** used to design and test the process.
- **Provide clear modelling of how assessment outcomes translate into funding decisions**, including transparency regarding any automated or algorithmic decision-making processes.
- **Clarify review and appeal mechanisms**, including confirmation that accessible and effective merits review through the Administrative Review Tribunal will remain available.
- **Publish safeguards for transition**, including how inequitable outcomes will be prevented and addressed.

- **Provide a clear and detailed rollout schedule**, including cohorts, timelines, and risk mitigation strategies.
- **Work collaboratively with DROs** on a staged and incremental consultation.

Disability Representative Organisations stand ready to engage constructively in reforms that are transparent, accountable and are grounded in genuine consultation. Reform legitimacy depends on respecting people with disability as key partners that bring valuable lived expertise and experience to achieve transparent, fair, and rights-consistent policy design.

About our organisations

This statement was developed by DROs with coordination support from Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) in their role as the National Coordination. DROs are funded by the Australian Government to represent people with disability.

The following organisations have contributed to and/or expressed their support for this joint position statement:

- Australian Autism Alliance
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia
- Community Mental Health Australia
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia
- Down Syndrome Australia Consortium
- First Peoples Disability Network Australia
- Inclusion Australia
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- People with Disability Australia
- Physical Disability Australia
- Women With Disabilities Australia

We acknowledge the significant contributions made by People with Disability Australia to this statement's development.