



# Disability Royal Commission Australian Government Response: Volume 9

## First Nations people with disability

Volume 9 outlines the issues and themes shared with the Disability Royal Commission by a wide range of First Nations people with disability, their families, carers, supporters and communities. It includes 13 recommendations. The Australian Government has primary or shared responsibility for 10 of the 13 recommendations.

First Nations people with disability	
Recommendation	Australian Government Response
9.4: Expand NDIS community connector programs	Accept
9.5: NDIS block funding for First Nations Community Controlled Organisations	Accept in Principle
9.6: First Nations representation on the NDIA Board	Accept in Principle
9.7: Participation in cultural life	Accept in Principle
9.8: NDIS return to country	Accept in Principle
9.9: funding family supports	Accept in Principle
9.10: First Nations Disability Forum	Accept in Principle
9.11: Building on the Disability Sector Strengthening Plan	Accept in Principle
9.12: Disability-inclusive cultural safety standards	Accept in Principle
9.13: Remote workforce development	Accept in Principle

## Key actions and initiatives

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is implementing a variety of initiatives to support better NDIS accessibility and a more culturally appropriate NDIS, including exploring ways to expand its Remote Community Connectors program.

The Australian Government is partnering with communities to explore and trial different ways to design and deliver NDIS supports for participants in remote and First Nations communities. This includes through Alternative Commissioning and Integrated Care and Commissioning.

The NDIA, with the First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN), is co-designing a NDIS First Nations Strategy with participants, First Nations disability community, families, carers, and sector stakeholders, to improve access and outcomes for First Nations people with disability in the NDIS.

The NDIS First Nations Advisory Council has been established as a co-design group to ensure the voices and perspectives of First Nations people with lived experience, and their families, carers and communities are central to the development of the First Nations Strategy.

The NDIA, FPDN and the First Nations Advisory Council are working together to develop goals and initiatives to best support First Nations NDIS participants and to ensure that all decisions that affect First Nations participants:

- are informed by First Nations voices and experiences
- reflect the goals and hopes of First Nations communities
- embed principles of self-determination
- are culturally informed, safe, accessible and inclusive.

The Australian Government has committed to working with state and territory governments in partnership with First Nations people on consultation to develop a First Nations Disability Forum or other appropriate shared decision-making mechanism. This will support the cross-cutting outcome of disability under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and policy design, reform and implementation to improve access, inclusion and outcomes for First Nations people with disability across Australia.

Governments are committed to working with FPDN through 2024 to strengthen implementation of the current Disability Sector Strengthening Plan to enable improved outcomes against the existing actions.

The Australian Government will work to improve the cultural safety of supports, including through improved market stewardship and regulation. They will work with First Nations people with disability, community-controlled organisations, mainstream support providers and other disability support providers. This will build on consultations on the regulatory model for quality and safeguarding of NDIS supports in response to the NDIS Review.

## Government investment

- The NDIA provides funding of over **\$11.8 million** per annum for a network of approximately 200 Remote Community Connectors to support more than 430 remote communities. Remote Community Connectors fulfil a critical function in First Nations communities promoting awareness, understanding and connection between NDIS participants, providers, and the NDIS, and have an important role in participant wellbeing.
- In the 2023-24 Budget, the Australian Government allocated **\$7.6 million** to pilot Alternative Commissioning, with the first pilot currently underway in the Maningrida region of the Northern Territory.
- In the 2023-24 Budget, the Australian Government committed **\$27 million** over four years to trial Integrated Care and Commissioning in up to 10 locations.
- On 30 January 2024, the Government announced a **\$10.2 million** commitment to repair the market for better ways to access and pay for supports. As part of this commitment, **\$2.5 million** was provided for the design and consultation of a new NDIS pricing and payments framework.