

NSW DISABILITY NETWORK FORUM

This Update is designed to provide information on the activities of the NSW Disability Network Forum (DNF). Updates are produced regularly after scheduled DNF meetings. Contact the DNF through the NCOSS secretariat at the contact details listed below.

In June, the group heard from two guest speakers whose presentations are outlined below.

Presentation, Local Area Coordinator (LAC) roles at Uniting – Meghan Vesey NSW Operations Manager Local Area Coordination NDIS Transition Services

Meghan explained the role and work undertaken by Local Area Coordinators (LACs). The process runs as follows

1. LACs initially run information sessions for people likely to be eligible for the NDIS.
2. After the person has been assessed as eligible by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), LACs meet them face-to-face and complete a guided questionnaire to establish the participant's current supports, immediate and unmet needs, and aspirations and goals.
3. The information gathered from this questionnaire is sent to the NDIA and forms the basis of a plan to be approved.

LACs are initially working with people in ADHC-run group homes. Members highlighted the importance of LACs taking proactive steps to ascertain residents' communication needs and provide any assistance they may require to communicate, as well as being trained in alternative communication methods (for example, pictures).

It was confirmed that if a person has engaged in preplanning and developed a costed NDIS plan highlighting their needs and aspirations, this plan can be inputted into the NDIA system. DNF members will be in ongoing contact with the LACs to discuss these issues.

Presentation, *Further Unravelling Psychological Disability: Experiences of the NDIS in the NSW Trial Site*-Tina Smith: Senior Policy Adviser Mental Health Co-ordinating Council (MHCC).

Tina gave a presentation on MHCC's report, *Further Unravelling Psychological Disability: Experiences of the NDIS in the NSW Trial Site* [which is available by clicking on this link](#).

Tina reported that there has been increasing awareness and acceptance of psychosocial disability by the NDIA during the trial period, but there are still inconsistencies around eligibility and the number of NDIS participants a primary mental health disability is below projected investments. Despite messaging around the [NSW NDIS Rules](#), there is room for new participants to enter the scheme before full roll out (in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement between NSW and the Commonwealth).

The NDIA has purchased MHCC publications on understanding and working with mental illness, [which are available by clicking on this link](#).

Other business

The finalised DNF submission into the review of the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) [is available by clicking on this link](#).

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About the NSW Disability Network Forum

The NSW Disability Network Forum comprises non-government, non-provider peak representative, advocacy and information groups whose primary purpose is to promote the interests of people with disability. The aim of the DNF is to build capacity so that the interests of people with disability are advanced through policy and systemic advocacy.

NSW Disability Network Forum Member Organisations:

- Being Mental Health and Wellbeing Consumer Advisory Group
- Blind Citizens NSW
- Deaf Australia NSW
- DeafBlind Association NSW
- Deafness Council (NSW)
- First Peoples Disability Network
- Information on Disability and Education Awareness Services (IDEAS) NSW
- Institute for Family Advocacy
- Intellectual Disability Rights Service
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW
- NSW Council for Intellectual Disability
- NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS)
- NSW Disability Advocacy Network
- People with Disability Australia
- Physical Disability Council of NSW
- Positive Life NSW
- Side by Side Advocacy Incorporated
- Self Advocacy Sydney
- Synapse (Brain Injury Association NSW)