SUBMISSION 1 OF 2 · SUPPORT COORDINATION AND CONNECTION REFORM

In their own words

Participants and families on the Support Coordination and Connection reform · October 2026

Disability Intermediaries Australia

Keeley Goldrick, Acting CEO · 2 October 2026 · Response to the Support Coordination and Connection Reform Consultation Paper (participant questions)

Who we heard from

387 NDIS participants, nominees and family members answered DIA's NDIS Participant or Family Member Survey on Support Coordination Reforms between 15 September and 2 October 2026. Their message is consistent: keep the right to choose their Support Coordination provider, and keep the relationships that already work. What they told us matches the findings of the Independent Review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS Review) and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission). It also meets the goals the Support Coordination and Connection Reform Consultation Paper sets for the new Support Coordination and Connection (SCC) service.

Disability Intermediaries Australia (DIA) is the national peak body for Support Coordination and Plan Management. We asked participants directly because this reform changes their support most: after 1 July 2028, many will lose the coordinator they have now. The survey was open to anyone and shared through DIA members, DIA's Support Coordination and Connection reform town hall on 15 September 2026, and participant networks, so respondents chose to take part.

We answer questions 1 and 3 to 7 of the Support Coordination and Connection Reform Consultation Paper where participants gave us evidence. On question 2, people asked for enough time, higher standards and better communication, not less choice. This is the first of two DIA submissions. The second, drawing on our survey of Support Coordination providers, answers the Support Coordination and Connection Reform Consultation Paper's questions on service provider models and approaches.

What is working now (question 1)

What participants value most is a coordinator who already knows them. When asked what works, people rarely described a service. They described a person who knows their history, their family, their local services and what to do when something goes wrong.

> *"Before I had my current Support Coordinator, I had eight different Support Coordinators in one year. I know from that experience how difficult it is to keep starting again with new people, explaining my history and trying to build trust. Having the same person for seven years has completely changed that experience for me."*
> **— Participant with complex support needs who requires 2:1 support**

Face to face, and for whom (questions 3 and 4)

Nine in ten respondents (91.5%, 353 of 386) want face-to-face support available. The largest group (43.8%) want to choose between face to face and virtual as needed, and 19.7% want to meet where they choose, not only at an office. Only 8.5% said they do not need to meet in person. A 90-year-old full-time carer told us they rely on a coordinator they can *"speak or see"*.

On who should have access, 89.8% (342 of 381) said everyone on the NDIS would benefit from a Support Coordinator. Only 5.8% said it should be limited to people with complex circumstances. The Support Coordination and Connection Reform Consultation Paper proposes the opposite direction: a narrower group, assessed against eligibility factors.

The written answers show who would lose most if choice is narrowed too: people whose right match depends on identity, language, culture or Deaf community knowledge, not only skill.

> *"I am a gay transgender man. I would be deeply fearful of not being able to choose a person who is accepting of me."*
> **— Participant**

What makes a good coordinator, and what makes people safe (questions 5 and 6)

Participants want a coordinator who knows the NDIS, the local area and disability. Every quality we asked about, including qualifications, was chosen by most respondents.

Participants want knowledge of the NDIS, the local area and disability



Share of 386 respondents choosing each attribute; more than one could be chosen. DIA NDIS Participant or Family Member Survey on Support Coordination Reforms, 15 September to 2 October 2026.

This is the expertise the NDIS Review found missing in the large contracted Partners in the Community program, and every provider should be required to have it. On safety, people want a coordinator who knows them well enough to notice when something is wrong, and the freedom to leave if they are not right.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's own records support this. In its Own Motion Inquiry into Support Coordination and Plan Management, Part 1 (August 2023), 104 complaints (23%) were about coordinators denying participants' choice and control, including refusing to act on a decision to change coordinator. Removing choice altogether does not fix that harm. Participants also asked for registration, audits and minimum training: they want a higher standard and the right to change.

One provider per region (question 7)

Participants do not want the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to choose their Support Coordination provider for them, and very few support one provider per local area.

Regional respondents described what one provider covering a large area already looks like:

> *"Small towns are generally lumped in with providers from hundreds of miles away, who have no local knowledge and often forget about the towns not close to them. We have this problem across multiple government sectors."*
> **— Regional respondent**

Many participants will lose their current coordinator. The Support Coordination and Connection Reform Consultation Paper states that other current providers *"will no longer deliver these services from 1 July 2028"*. For the Support Coordinators who work for them, it offers only that there *"may be opportunities"* to move into an SCC role. Nothing protects the Support Coordination providers participants chose, and nothing requires a new SCC provider to employ the trained Support Coordinators participants already trust. If Partners in the Community organisations win the contracts, participants would move to the service the NDIS Review found had high caseloads and limited local knowledge.

Why hiring existing staff is not enough

Requiring a new SCC provider, possibly a Partners in the Community organisation, to hire existing Support Coordinators is necessary (Recommendation 3), but it does not keep what participants value.

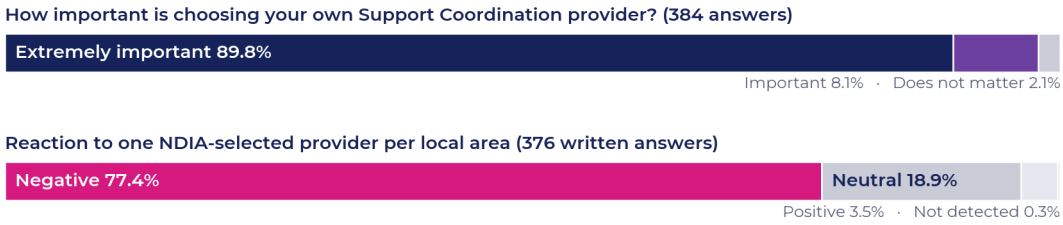
Participants choose an organisation, not only a person. Specialist providers offer specialist services, such as psychosocial recovery, Deaf community knowledge, culturally safe practice and support for children with complex needs. That expertise sits in the team, its supervision and its practice. It does not move when one coordinator changes employer.

Quality differs between organisations. The NDIS Review described Support Coordination quality as a lottery, and the same person works differently under a new employer's caseloads and rules. One participant said their coordinator has only 20 clients and always knows what is going on; with a bigger company, they were *"only a number"*.

Providers do not sit inside regional boundaries. Many work across several regions, or from a city for people in rural areas. One remote respondent wanted to *"nominate my choice of SC from the city"*. A contract drawn around one region cannot carry those relationships with it.

Coordinators may not move at all. One participant expected their provider to close and said: *"I don't expect that these employees would take up roles in a single large provider."*

Choice matters to 97.9%; 77.4% respond negatively to one provider per region



DIA NDIS Participant or Family Member Survey on Support Coordination Reforms, 15 September to 2 October 2026. Sentiment of written answers scored by SurveyMonkey text analysis.

The evidence already on the record

Independent Review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS Review)

Drawn from the NDIS Review final report, *Working together to deliver the NDIS* (December 2023), its supporting analysis Support for all people with disability to better navigate mainstream and disability supports, and its Navigators fact sheet.

What the NDIS Review found	What participants told us
Support Coordination quality is a lottery, and there is often no single, consistent point of contact (NDIS Review supporting analysis on navigation).	One participant had eight coordinators in one year before finding the one they have kept for seven. 97.9% say choosing their Support Coordination provider is important.
Large-scale contracting left Partners in the Community without deep local knowledge, and high caseloads made relationships transactional (NDIS Review supporting analysis on navigation).	227 respondents have had a Local Area Coordinator. 52.5% described it negatively, citing limited knowledge, rare contact and constant staff changes.
Navigators should have good local knowledge (NDIS Review Navigators fact sheet).	94.3% want NDIS knowledge and local connections; 85.8% want understanding of disability.
Support Coordination is not available consistently or in proportion to need (NDIS Review supporting analysis on navigation).	89.8% say everyone on the NDIS would benefit from a Support Coordinator.

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

The Disability Royal Commission found that being denied choice and control can increase the risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation (Final Report, Volume 10: Disability services). Responding to its Safeguards and Quality issues paper, people named fear of retribution almost universally as a barrier to complaining (Overview of responses to the Safeguards and Quality issues paper). A person who does not trust the only coordinator on offer has nowhere else to take a concern, and may stop asking for help at all. That is a serious safeguarding gap: not a poorer service, but a person who goes quiet.

Unprompted, at least 37 respondents raised safety, abuse or not being able to complain. One warned that people *"without advocates or with quiet voices will be at risk"*.

> *"I would not feel comfortable talking to someone I don't know about any issues I have with my providers or my plan and I would feel very vulnerable and I'd be at risk of exploitation and or fraud."*
> **— Participant**

Meeting the goals of the Support Coordination and Connection reform

What participants ask for delivers the objectives the Support Coordination and Connection Reform Consultation Paper sets for the new service, and two needs the NDIA's own consultation with more than 370 stakeholders found: continuity of trusted relationships, and choice and control kept within a commissioned model.

Goal or problem in the Consultation Paper	What participants told us	What meets it
Choice and control (SCC objective); choice kept in a commissioned model (NDIA consultation finding)	97.9% say choosing their Support Coordination provider is important	A national panel, with the participant choosing from it
Continuity of trusted relationships (NDIA consultation finding; first SCC transition priority)	Eight coordinators in a year, then seven years with one	Coordinators kept where providers meet the standard; new providers offer roles to existing staff
Equity and inclusion (SCC objective); access in regional, remote and thin markets	Identity, language and culture matter; regional people want someone who knows the area	Choice not bound by region, face to face everywhere, and help to find a provider
Safety and safeguarding (SCC objective); conflicts of interest; inconsistent oversight	The freedom to leave is a safeguard; people asked for registration and audits	One enforceable standard for every panel provider, plus the right to change
Inconsistent quality (problem the Consultation Paper names); variable workforce capability	94.3% want NDIS knowledge and local connections; 85.8% understanding of disability	A panel standard requiring NDIS knowledge, disability expertise and relevant training

What participants are asking for

DIA recommends:

1. **A panel, not a single provider.** Commission a national panel of quality-checked providers, and let each participant choose from it.
2. **Choice not bound by region.** Participants choose a provider who understands their condition, culture or identity, wherever it is based.
3. **Relationships kept through the transition.** Where a participant's current coordinator works for a provider that meets the standard, the participant keeps them after 1 July 2028. Any new SCC provider must offer roles to existing Support Coordinators under the SCHADS Award.
4. **One enforceable standard for every provider.** Registration, audit, minimum training and separation from other NDIS services.
5. **Help to choose.** A published list of panel providers, and help to find and change provider.
6. **Face to face everywhere.** Every panel provider offers in-person support at a place the participant chooses, alongside virtual contact.

> *"I don't want the person supporting me to be chosen simply because of where I live. I want to have a say in who supports me, because I am the person who has to live with the consequences of that decision."*
> **— Participant**

A panel with one standard, participant choice at its centre and a transition built around existing relationships gives the Australian Government oversight and participants a service they can trust.