

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**  
**2017-2018 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome:** National Disability Insurance Agency

**Question No:** NDIA SQ17-000138

**Topic:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy

**Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator McCarthy,** asked:

On 17 March this year the NDIA released the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy. What beyond releasing the document is being done to ensure it is actually implemented and how will this be reviewed? Will there be an implementation plan? Will there be any engagement directly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to provide feedback on its implementation and again as a review process? How will the NDIA ensure that the Engagement Strategy is implemented in rural and remote areas and how will this be properly monitored?

**Answer:**

The National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy (the Strategy) acknowledges the successful delivery of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) can only be achieved by working closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities. The NDIA is committed to working with communities to develop new ways of approaching engagement and service delivery through understanding and respect for ATSI culture.

The Strategy was developed in close consultation with a reference group, which included representatives from advocacy and service delivery organisations working with ATSI communities. The NDIA will continue to engage with appropriate representatives at a national level during the implementation of the Strategy. The NDIA Regional Managers are responsible for identifying and working with local ATSI communities to develop and roll out the NDIS.

The Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services and the Department of Social Services attended the Redfern Statement Disability Workshop held in Sydney on 2 May 2017 hosted by the First Peoples Disability Network. Attendees at the meeting noted the Strategy and the NDIA's commitment to working with communities to develop new ways of approaching engagement and service delivery.

The NDIA will establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and reporting on progress against the Strategy, to enhance the NDIA's accountability in this area. This will enable the NDIA to review the appropriateness of the Strategy and identify opportunities for improvement.

Specific initiatives which support the implementation of the Strategy include:

- The East Arnhem Co-Design Project. This project places a significant focus on supporting communities (one community at a time) to develop strategies to increase economic and social participation as part of delivery of the NDIS.
- Projects with communities in Western Sydney in New South Wales, Doomagee and Morningson in Queensland, Ceduna and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands in South Australia to consider how to build on the opportunities the NDIS brings to individuals and communities for local economic development.

- The NDIS has been rolled out in full in Tennant Creek (Northern Territory) Palm Island (Queensland). The NDIA has reflected on the lessons from these sites, particularly from its experience with engaging with the local communities and has used these lessons to contribute to the NDIA's much more targeted approach to engage with ATSI communities.
- Metropolitan co-design project. The NDIA in collaboration with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is exploring opportunities to use community by community approach to a metropolitan area.
- The NDIA's Partners in the Community delivering Local Area Coordination and Early Childhood Early Intervention are required to employ staff who represent the community where they work. The current average of ATSI staff employed as at 31 March 2017 is 4.7 per cent. Good connections have been made with Aboriginal communities in North Eastern Melbourne area and Western Sydney in particular through the work of our partners.