

NDIS National Workforce Plan: 2021-2025

Sector briefing 29 June 2021 Transcript

Start: 09:19

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Luke Mansfield and I'm the Group Manager in the Department of Social Services Market Capability Group and today I'm here to take you through the NDIS National Workforce Plan and its 16 initiatives.

I want to start with two things. This session is being recorded so that those from the sector who are unable to participate will be able to look at it later and we will be doing a summary of this session for the benefit of the sector.

I also want to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of lands around the country and acknowledge and pay my respects to elders past present and emerging and extend those respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in this briefing session.

I'm really pleased that so many people have been able to join for this session today I think over 78 people have joined so far. We welcome your interest in this NDIS National Workforce Plan and we're really keen to ensure there is rich and deep consultation with the sector as we seek to implement these initiatives. As is reflected in the plan we see the sector as critical partners for the overall goal and that is to build a sustainable and capable workforce into the future to support the NDIS and its participants to get the services and supports they need.

To help the flow of the presentation, could I please ask everyone go onto mute and stay on mute.

We will have a question and answer session at the end of the presentation. You are very welcome to ask questions in the chat section throughout the presentation, and I will do my best to respond to as many questions as possible at the end. If there are things that we can't respond to we will also seek to take note of those and where necessary we'll put some further information out about those initiatives or pick it up in one of the future sessions with the sector which we've committed to do. The presentation slides will also provide an indication going forward of how you will be able to engage with us around each of the initiatives.

Hopefully you can see the slides but we'll make sure we put the slides on the department's website after this session.

The Australian Government is committed to delivering on the NDIS, and that includes ensuring there is a strong and sustainable workforce to support it.

The NDIS National Workforce Plan was launched by Minister Reynolds on 10 June 2021.

We want to work closely with the sector as we implement this Plan to ensure we can build a modern, responsive, capable workforce caring for our fellow Australians both now and into the future.

As many of you will be aware, more than 500,000 participants will be supported by the NDIS when it reaches full Scheme maturity, with an additional 83,000 workers needed to support them.

Initiatives in the Plan are designed to attract workers with suitable skills, values and attributes, while also improving existing workers' access to training and development opportunities.

The initiatives in the Plan will not only support quality and growth in the disability sector and the NDIS, but also support other complementary initiatives in aged care and support for our veterans, through greater alignment particularly of regulation.

Through strengthening a responsive and capable workforce, NDIS participants, older Australians and veterans will be afforded greater choice and control without compromising on quality and safeguarding.

The Plan will generate benefits for participants, workers, providers, and the broader economy.

To recap on how we got to where we are, the Plan has been subject to extensive consultation with participants, providers, peak bodies, experts and Commonwealth and state and territory governments.

There has been stakeholder meetings, workshops and an open survey and that has occurred over more than 12 months of engagement with the sector.

We have welcomed this broad engagement, and will continue to work closely with you as we implement the plan.

The Workforce Plan sets out three Priority areas and sixteen initiatives to drive better workforce and participant outcomes and growth. We'll go into each of the initiatives in more detail throughout the presentation.

I'll start with Priority 1, which is to improve community understanding of the benefits of working in the care and support sector and strengthen entry pathways for suitable workers to enter the sector.

Priority 1 aims to improve community understanding of the benefits of working in the care and support sector and strengthen entry pathways for suitable workers to come into sector.

Initiatives 1 to 5 are part of an integrated journey to attract new workers to the care and support sector – in particular focussed on how we can target workers that may not have previously considered working in the sector, but have the right values and attributes as well as skills.

The first initiative is around promoting opportunities in the care and support sector.

As you know, Australia's ageing population and more participants in the NDIS means there is a critical need to grow the care and support workforce over coming years.

I mentioned earlier, up to 83,000 additional workers will be required in the NDIS in the next few years and in addition to that, 57,000 workers will be required for aged care by 2024, and the veterans' care sector will benefit from growth in both areas.

This workforce, as reflected in feedback from the sector, it is really important that they have the right skills but also the right qualities to meet the changing needs of people with disability and older Australians, now and into the future.

Initiative 1 will seek to promote the care and support sector through a range of communication activities that aims to lift public perception of the sector, and really highlight benefits of working in the sector and the opportunities. This is aimed at attracting and identifying new workers who have the right values and attributes.

The communication activities will promote the care and support workforce – that is, across the disability, aged-care and veterans' care sectors. The intention is to focus the activities on emphasising the benefits of working in the sector through real stories of the positive connections between workers and the people they support. We have been doing quite a bit of work already to test ideas around this and will be working closely with the sector ahead of commencement of these communication activities in a few months' time.

Initiative 2 is about developing a simple and accessible online tool for job seekers to self-assess their suitability for new roles based on values, attributes, skills and experience. Through this initiative we'll be seeking to develop a simple and accessible online tool that allows potential workers to look at roles in the care and support sector to assess whether it is the right fit for them based on values, attributes, skills and experiences.

The online tool, we intend to extensively user test the tool to ensure it is fit for purpose. If you would like to participate in user testing for development of the tool please reach out to the NDIS National Workforce Plan mailbox which is NDISworkforceplan@dss.gov.au. We will post this on the department's website so you can find those details.

Initiative 3 is around improving effectiveness of jobs boards to match job seekers to vacancies in the sector. We really want to make it easier for job seekers to find care and support jobs that are right for them with more effective jobs boards.

We're going to work very closely with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment as well as relevant provider peaks, participant peaks and other providers to look at ways we can improve jobs boards to help match workers to vacancies. This will include helping job seekers to navigate jobs boards and providing information that deepens their understanding of the sector and potential roles.

For example, when a job seeker clicks through on a jobs board they will land on a page that includes information about the sector, and be able to assess whether it is a good fit for them, learn more about requirements for working in the sector, and then directly click through and apply for jobs in the sector.

Initiative 4 is about leveraging employment programs to ensure suitable job seekers can find work in the sector. The intention is to work with other stakeholders to implement improvements to existing employment programs and potentially establish new initiatives. This will focus in on:

- Enhancing efforts to identify suitable new workers
- Raising awareness of opportunities in the care and support sector
- Exploring employment service providers trials
- Ensuring strong links between care and support service employers, employment service providers as well as workers. For example, through employment programs supporting placements for workers in the care and support sector by developing information sessions and training materials for employment service providers and employers.

Initiative 5 is about better connecting NDIS and care and support providers to employment and training providers and workers.

The Boosting the Local Care Workforce Program as you may be aware employs up to 25 Regional Coordinators to help local organisations build sustainable businesses and to grow their workforce under the NDIS. The way that they do that is by providing localised support and gathering intelligence for government and for the department on provider and workforce issues.

The Program is expanding its remit to the broader care and support sector to not only support NDIS providers but also aged care and veterans' care providers over the period ahead.

The focus of this expansion will be on workforce, ensuring providers can access jobseekers, by strengthening the connections to training and employment services providers.

In the 2020-21 Budget \$16.9 million was announced for this expansion and the extension to the program from 1 July 2021 through to 30 June 2023.

The current remit of Regional Coordinators and Subject Matter Specialists will be expanded to leverage existing networks to provide market demand information on workers to educators and employment service providers so that they can understand the demand.

The coordinator cohort will actively engage with:

- Providers across the care and support sector
- As well as education providers so universities and VET sector providers
- As well as employment services providers.

That is the end of the initiatives around priority one. Priority 2 is focused on training and support for the NDIS workforce. This will be achieved through a number of initiatives:

- Establishing micro-credentials that enable workers to upskill
- A Care and Support Worker Professional Network which promotes excellence
- Developing a skills passport to enable the recording of training and also to support enhanced flexibility and
- Helping students into the care and support sector through supported traineeships

These initiatives are in addition to the certificate qualifications review already underway and the ongoing work of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to implement the Capability Framework through information and tools for the sector.

The first of these initiatives is developing micro-credentials and updating nationally recognised training to improve the quality of supports and enhance career pathways.

The government's investment in disability micro-credentials will provide the sector with greater flexibility in meeting workforce skill and training needs.

This commitment builds on the government's economic recovery agenda as we emerge from COVID-19 by expanding opportunities for job seekers impacted by the pandemic to find work in the rapidly expanding care and support sector.

It is intended to expand the range and scope of industry-recognised training available to care and support workers and contribute to improvements in relation to the safety and quality of services received by NDIS participants.

We're very conscious there will be a need for extensive stakeholder consultation and that will occur across 2021-22, including with carers and participants and their families. We will be seeking to map skill requirements and inform development of guidance on curriculum topics, content and assessment.

The Human Services Skills Organisation (HSSO) have agreed to lead the consultation and co-design process around this work and the department will approach the market shortly to procure a consultant to support this activity by HSSO. HSSO has deep experience in these issues and we will be seeking to work with them to actively engage the sector around the development of micro-credentials. In terms of timing, it is anticipated that guidance on topics and content for micro-credentials will be made available to Registered Training Organisations in the second half of 2022.

The next initiative is around supporting the sector to develop a Care and Support Worker Professional Network.

Government investment in care and support professional networks will seek to support more workers in the sector to connect with peers and with peer support to share and promote good practice.

This commitment will contribute to workforce retention and continuous learning. We're very conscious that in this sector a lot of disability support workers operate in individual homes and can be a bit more isolated from their peers and supervisors and management lines.

Developing and implementing a care and support worker professional network will hopefully contribute to improvements in relation to quality of services and safety of participants but also support those really important peer connections across the sector.

We will be focusing this initiative on workers who are more isolated or experiencing significant challenges. It is likely this will be a placed based approach to pilot different models about how best to establish peer support and mentoring network supports.

We are intending that we would run a pilot of professional networks during the course of 2022, in close collaboration with the sector.

Initiative 8 is to work with the sector around establishing a skills passport. Government investment in a national care and support worker skills passport is intended to support workforce growth, retention and mobility by making it easier and more cost effective for employees, employers and participants to verify worker qualifications, experience and other employment requirements.

By contributing to greater transparency on worker skills and qualifications, the passport will enhance the safety and quality of services received by participants.

We will be engaging extensively with stakeholders around this initiative including with carers, as well as participants and their families to ensure the care and support national skills passport meets the needs of employees, employers and participants.

Initiative 9 is around supporting the sector to grow the number of traineeships and student placements, working closely with education institutions and professional bodies.

Government remains committed to growing the workforce to meet projected service demand.

A big part of this is about enabling traineeships and student placements to help ensure preparation of a job-ready workforce and that also goes to the quality and safety of services received by participants.

This initiative will seek to explore ways to make better use of existing supports for traineeships, identify barriers to their uptake and develop strategies to address identified gaps and issues. This includes investigating ways that increase confidence and promote the value of student placements in disability services.

Consultation is already underway with disability support providers, universities and other disability stakeholders to define barriers to student placements and overtime will inform options for future work in this area.

We will be working across Commonwealth and state and territory governments to leverage existing initiatives such as JobTrainer to further support traineeships and student placements.

An extensive consultation process will guide option development and refinement. Timeframes for delivery of this initiative will be dependent on the options identified to grow student placements and traineeships.

That brings us to the end of priority 2 initiatives. Priority 3 initiatives are really focussed on some of the broad enablers of workforce development and growth so focussing on reducing red tape, facilitating new service models and innovation, and providing more market information about opportunities in the care and support sector.

We heard through the consultation process that there are many opportunities to support workforce growth including through red tape reduction and enhancing market information. Seven initiatives have been included in the Plan to support that innovation.

Initiative 10 is about improving alignment of provider regulation and worker screening across the care and support sector in a way that is trying to improve efficiency, reduce red tape but without compromising on quality and safety.

As many of the people working in the sector will be aware, there are some similar services and supports provided across aged care, disability support and veterans' care, indeed there are quite a number of providers that operate across one, two or three of those sectors, yet they are subject to separate and overlapping regulatory frameworks. This overlap in regulatory requirements does add additional requirements on the sector and additional burden on the sector.

Recent inquiries such as the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety have highlighted the need for a lifting of standards to ensure safety and quality of care in aged care.

We're intending to take a staged approach to engagement with the sector but also to regulatory reform, and through consultation and co-design develop up options that respond to issues that have arisen through relevant inquiries and to reduce regulatory burden wherever possible.

In the 2021-22 Budget there was funding of \$12.3 million over two years for the first stage for some of these regulatory alignment activities across the aged care, disability and veterans' care sectors. Information on the scope of these measures will be provided to the sector very shortly with a fact sheet and stakeholder consultation plan under development currently. I want to assure the sector there is strong commitment to close consultation and engagement around regulatory alignment and we're very conscious it will be important to understand and unpack the detail in this area before making any changes.

Initiative 11 is about continuing to improve NDIS pricing approaches to ensure effective operation of the market, including in relation to thin markets

The government is committed to the development of an effective NDIS market that gives participants genuine choice and control over the supports they need as well as ensuring the financial sustainability of the Scheme for generations to come.

The government is conducting a project on pricing for the effective operation of the NDIS market by identifying potential options for different ways of pricing and payment arrangements to improve outcomes for participants as well as Scheme sustainability.

The department is likely to release a public consultation paper on this later in 2021 with further detail to follow.

Initiative 12 is providing market demand information across the care and support sector to help identify new business opportunities.

There has already been quite a lot of work done the NDIS demand map and initiative 12 will seek to expand market information across the broader care and support sector – aged care and veterans' care as well as the NDIS. This is intended to help support service providers to inform their decision making, including where they may wish to expand their operations or where they may choose to broaden so they operate across multiple parts of the care and support sector.

The Government announced in the 2020-21 Budget that it would expand the demand map to support that activity and the new care and support sector demand visualisation tool will

encompass broad care and support services, including allied health. We'll be engaging with the sector including through user acceptance testing around those initiatives.

The next initiative is on supporting participants to find more of the services and supports they need online. We know that some participants have fed back that they can face higher navigation costs when searching for services which meet their needs particularly in thin markets.

The NDIA is providing access to Application Programming Interfaces to help allow connections between registered providers and some NDIA systems and data to potentially support software developers to work with registered providers to provide better offerings to participants around the information services they have available. More work is being done to release more Application Programming Interfaces and allow other businesses to start accessing NDIA Application Programming Interfaces.

The Department of Social Services will work with the NDIA, provider peaks, participant peaks as well as participants to explore options that better assist participants and their families to have greater visibility the online products and services available in the market.

Initiative 14 is exploring options to support allied health professionals to work alongside allied health assistants as well as disability support workers to increase capacity and respond to participants' needs.

We will be working to explore options to improve the interaction and interface between those three groups of workers to deliver effective multi-disciplinary support that better meets the needs of participants.

We're very conscious that this will require really close consultation with the allied health services workforce, professional bodies, as well as participants and their families. We're going to seek to do that across the second half this calendar year and guide the development of options to educate workers on roles, responsibilities and how that multi-disciplinary support model can be optimised.

We'll also explore as part of that whether there is additional professional guidance that may be required to support existing regulatory requirements on supervision and delegation of allied health services by allied health professionals.

Also exploring the development of tailored micro-credentials in the first half of 2022.

Initiative 15 is about enabling allied health professionals in rural and remote areas to access professional support via telehealth.

This is around allied health professionals who particularly might be working in rural and remote areas being able to access support from peers in urban areas and to get professional assistance in supporting them in how they provide services and supports to participants.

We are going to be working with provider peaks, participant peaks, allied health providers and the workforce to highlight the availability of NDIA service options in this area. This will include the ability for providers to case conference and bill for multiple therapists without the participant needing to be present, so long as the participant approves.

Initiative 16, by no means last, is to help build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled sector to enhance culturally safe NDIS services.

We know that culturally safe NDIS services support Indigenous job seekers to overcome barriers to working in the care and support sector and also enables Indigenous participants to choose Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services where available.

We are working with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation to increase the number of its member Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to register to deliver NDIS services and to expand the existing service offering of existing providers under the NDIS Ready Project which is in place to help improve access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the culturally safe supports.

So that brings us to the end of the description of all of the initiatives. There were a lot of questions throughout the presentation, thank you, almost 100 participants. I want to confirm if you wish to receive a copy of this presentation, please email the NDISworkforceplan@dss.gov.au and it will also be published on the department's website.

We've had a few questions in relation to ongoing consultation. We are intending to stand up some time-limited working groups for some initiatives which will include governments as well as the sector. And we'll continue to work with the Advisory Group on Market Oversight (AGMO), which is an advisory group to the department. It includes a number of representatives from across the sector.

In terms of consultation in the development of the Plan, and there is a slide within the Plan on this, we had an open consultation during the course of last year via the Department of Social Services engage website which was promoted online as well as through the DSS market oversight advisory group and we did receive submissions as part of that process and there's been many separate engagements with different providers since that time ahead of finalising the plan.

There was also a theme of questions around reducing duplication during implementation, and identifying connections and interdependencies between the projects. We have stood up an area within DSS that is coordinating the overall implementation of the NDIS National Workforce Plan and that's to ensure that internally within government we are connected. We've established a working group that involves all the other Commonwealth agencies that have an interest in different initiatives within the plan and will be meeting regularly with them. In terms of connections with the sector, I mentioned we will be standing up some different time-limited working groups.

As was mentioned in the slide deck, there is an opportunity to write to us to flag your interest in getting involved in specific consultations around specific initiatives. We will be providing an update to the sector every three months as we seek to implement different aspects and initiatives under the plan. This will also provide an opportunity for you to flag connection points that we may not have identified.

There was a question around what is meant by the term sector. What we mean is NDIS providers, aged care providers and veterans' care and support providers. That's broadly what we mean when I talk about the care and support sector. And the reason that we chose

to use that terminology rather than just focusing on the NDIS sector, if you like, is because there are quite a number of providers that operate across all three.

There's an increasing number of workers that operate across all three and we wanted to make sure that to try and build the NDIS workforce, that there aren't unintended consequences for aged care or veterans' care; but also that we're operating across government in a consistent way so that we can grow the whole sector to meet the needs of NDIS participants, older Australians and veterans in the years ahead.

There's quite a number of questions around allied health and student placements. There's still a lot more consultation and engagement to come and we're very keen to set up some specific engagement with the allied health professional bodies and sector around student placements in the disability sector. We will set up specific sessions around that and we would encourage those bodies and providers that specialise in those particular areas to write to us if you have a particular interest in engaging in that work and then we will come out to you separately around those processes.

Without pre-empting the outcome of consultation processes, what we would intend to look at is the opportunity for some very small scale pilots of initiatives that aim to support engagement between universities that offer allied health professional degrees and disability service providers to see whether we can get some more matching between universities and disability service providers around that. They're the kinds of things we want to explore with the sector but there will be other things as well. There was a suggestion in that regard around that we definitely need to also engage the education sector - such as universities and VET providers - our intention is absolutely to do that.

There's multiple sectors involved in the rollout of the NDIS workforce plan. There's the care and support sector, there's the education sector, which includes universities and VET providers, there's also the employment provider sector which are delivering services and support to help job seekers to find employment. All of those three sectors will need to work with government to deliver initiatives under this plan.

There's a question about what do we mean by 'providers' when we talk about NDIS, aged care and veterans providers. "Does that include allied health?" Short answer to that is yes, it absolutely includes allied health. What we mean is, NDIS providers delivering services and supports under the NDIS, which of course includes allied health. Or delivering services through aged care and through veterans care and obviously there's a spread of allied health and non-allied health services and support across all of those sectors.

Okay, I'm just reading more of the questions, they're coming in thick and fast.

One of the other things that has come out in the questions is around pay and attracting workers through paying workers well. The plan doesn't include pay and that is because there are industrial instruments that apply that get reviewed through existing processes across our economy, and that's where pay is set and changed and varied.

The Plan seeks to enable providers to be efficient as possible to help address regulatory duplication and overlap to help assist providers to reduce the cost of finding workers to work in the sector and support their training and learning and development needs and through doing that, enabling more efficient and effective business models for providers to operate in.

That gives providers the maximum flexibility around how they choose to operate their business models, including across multiple programs – NDIS, aged care, veterans care – and also enables them to make choices about whether they pay award rates, above award rates, negotiate enterprise agreements.

There's been feedback around the need for ongoing consultation with allied health as part of the process. I just want to reinforce, including in relation to public hospitals, I want to reinforce that we will absolutely include, as part of the consultations in relation to allied health, those issues.

I know there are quite a few AH reps who have joined this session, just to reinforce that we, through the NDIS workforce plan that's been launched by the Minister, it is intended to be a plan covering all aspects of the NDIS workforce. And of course there are many varied roles providing supports and services under the NDIS, and of course across the broader care and support sector. And so, that's why the language in the Plan talks about the sector as a whole. Yes, there are some specific initiatives that have been called out in relation to allied health, but the plan is most certainly intended to be a broad plan that's supporting the sector as a whole.

Some questions have been raised about states and territories, both in terms of engagement with them and also resources and complementary initiatives that they may have that are operating or intending to operate that will work with this plan. We will this week be engaging with state and territory officials and they have been engaged all the way along in the development of this NDIS workforce plan and disability ministers from states and territories endorsed the NDIS workforce plan.

Our intention is very much to work in a very collaborative way with state and territory officials as we seek to implement the plan to look at things that are being implemented and the sequencing of action in this plan as well as complementary initiatives that states and territories may be, of their own accord, implementing within their jurisdiction that are aimed at similar things. I'm aware for example, that there is and has been a campaign in WA for example around increasing the NDIS workforce and a public communication campaign around that. We've been having conversations with them around their learnings from that campaign. We're doing further work with other states and territories around other initiatives.

To reassure everyone, between the Commonwealth and the states, we will be working very closely as we seek to implement the plan and will be providing an update around implementation of the plan to state and territory and commonwealth disability ministers every six months.

There was a question around initiative 10 and is there a reason that mental health support is not included in the list for working across sectors. Many of you may already be aware, the National Skills Commission was tasked by the Prime Minister to do a broader piece around looking at care and support sector, looking at the skill needs, and doing analysis of what the requirements would be for the sector now and into the future. That review is intended to report to the relevant minister in September and will then inform further policy responses by government.

The NDIS National Workforce Plan is a significant plan covering the next four years but that of course does not mean that there may not be other initiatives that are initiated by

government or decisions taken by government with respect to further work across the care and support sector in light of other reviews. I'm very conscious that the Royal Commission continues to be underway, ongoing in relation to disability and of course as implementation of the government response to the Royal Commission on Aged Care continues over the years ahead there'll be lots of opportunity to focus on other connection points.

There's been a question around the BLCW program and some feedback around the assistance provided in their particular state. BLCW program was reviewed ahead of budget this year. It found that the program was working well and that the areas where it could continue to be refined, its ongoing connection with more and more providers across the sector, looking at the cross connection with employment providers, with the education sector which I mentioned – universities and VET providers, with aged providers and veterans care providers – and that's very much going to be the focus going forward.

We're certainly happy always to receive feedback from the sector around any gaps or concerns around the delivery of any of our programs including BLCW program. Please feel free to provide us feedback and we can follow up with the provider in relation to that.

To reiterate, if we don't get to all questions, we will analyse all of the chat that's come through and where we can, provide some further information on our website and certainly your feedback also helps to inform the way that we approach implementation going forward.

There's some feedback suggesting that we need to consider specialised skills, such as psychosocial disability and working with high levels of complexity. And I want to reinforce that there is a review of the qualifications underway, I mentioned the National Skills Commission doing work around the skills required. I mentioned that the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is also looking through the implementation of the Capability Framework around the skills needed to work in particular roles and the tools to support them.

As part of the micro-credential project, we're going to be mapping the particular skills, working very closely with the sector around this, to map the roles that exist across the NDIS, that will help inform both the common understanding of the roles across the sector, but also where we need to focus our energy and effort in terms of the development of micro-credentials. Thanks for the feedback around highlighting the importance of some of those skills sets that go to participants with more complex needs. We definitely agree that's an area of focus and we'll seek to put more fidelity on where we focus, first through the consultation process with the sector.

There's another theme coming out on pricing. There's some feedback around pricing needing to consider incentivising private practice supporting allied health student placements and looking at modelling the impact of NDIS charger rates on public health workforce allied health workforce.

There's going to be a lot of work done around continuing to explore ways that we can improve pricing and payment arrangements in the NDIS over time. We will be engaging with the sector to draw out what the key issues are from your perspective around pricing and payment arrangements and seek your input on ways that can continue to be improved so I won't respond to very specific things as part of this session, but we certainly would welcome active feedback from the sector as part of that project.

There's a question around whether there'll be consultation as part of the implementation of the workforce plan with relevant peaks. And the answer is yes, it won't be just through the Advisory Group on Market Oversight (AGMO) – we will engage with peaks throughout implementation. We wanted to provide a broad opportunity through this session for any people from across the sector to participate so you could hear as an initial take on the implementation of the Workforce Plan, where our thinking is at.

But obviously it's very early days in the implementation of particular measures, and as you will see in the slides there's a different pace of rollout for different initiatives and for those who write to us to express interest that would be a good way for us to get information out to you about when particular initiatives will be consulted on so that you can actively participate.

There's a question around can we include mental health peaks in the consultation, not just disability peaks. Yes, that's absolutely intended and I think we've actually got some mental health representation as part of the Advisory Group on Market Oversight.

Okay, I think we've covered the main themes from the feedback that's come through in the chat. So I'll just do a last call out for any final questions otherwise we will wrap up this session but just to reinforce a few things.

First, thank you very much to all of the sector for active participation throughout the development of the NDIS workforce plan. It is a significant plan, it's something I know that the Minister is very keen for the department to actively work with the sector around implementation to ensure we get it right, and we are absolutely committed to doing that. You will have seen that in the Plan itself we've made a commitment that it will be every three months for the first year, an opportunity for broad-based update to the sector about implementation. Likely to be a similar format to this, although we welcome feedback about how useful this session is and whether there are ways that we can continue to improve that, so please feel free to provide us with that feedback.

We will however, in between those broad-based update sessions, be engaging with the sector around particular initiatives and we welcome your active engagement and thank you very much for your time today.

There's been a question around how do we provide feedback, could we give a point or person of contact. The slide deck itself will include how you can contact us. You'll be able to look on the website for that, but as I mentioned before, NDISworkforce@dss.gov.au is the email address that you can email if you have any questions or want to express interest in being consulted or involved in consultations around particular initiatives. We'll send out the slide deck to those who participated in this, or you can also write to us at the email address I gave and we'll send out the slide deck to you.

Thank you very much for everyone on your questions. Really appreciate that and for joining this session. Have a great afternoon everyone.

End: 01:09:51