



27th May 2026
Committee Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

RE: Concerns regarding the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2026

Dear Committee Secretary,

The [Australian Multicultural Women's Alliance](http://www.amwa.net.au) (AMWA) writes to raise serious concerns regarding the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Bill 2026* and the potential impacts the proposed amendments may have on women, girls and gender-diverse people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities across Australia.

AMWA is the national peak body (led by [Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils' of Australia – FECCA](http://www.fecca.org.au)) representing women from multicultural, migrant and refugee backgrounds across Australia. We work to ensure that the voices, lived experiences and priorities of CALD women are centred within policy reform, service delivery and national decision-making processes. AMWA forms part of the National Women's Alliances, alongside Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA), the Working with Women Alliance (WWWA), and the National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC). Together, these alliances provide advocacy and representation for diverse groups of women across Australia, including women experiencing systemic disadvantage, marginalisation and intersectional discrimination.

AMWA stands alongside Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) and many other disability and community organisations in expressing deep concern regarding the limited timeframe provided for consultation on this Bill and the significant implications the proposed amendments may have for people living with disability, their families and communities. We strongly support [WWDA's submission](#) and recommendation that **the Bill not proceed in the absence of a comprehensive, public gender impact analysis, and gender-responsive reforms co-designed with women, girls and gender-diverse people with disability**. For CALD communities, this co-design must explicitly include women whose primary language is not English and whose engagement with the NDIS is already shaped by linguistic and cultural barriers.

AMWA notes and welcomes the amendments proposed by the Member for Fowler, Ms Dai Le, which specifically address the intersection of cultural and linguistic diversity with NDIS access and eligibility. Ms Le's second reading amendment rightly notes that culturally and linguistically diverse communities experience additional barriers in accessing and engaging with the NDIS, and that a lack of consultation with CALD participants and service providers may result in further barriers and inequity. Her substantive amendments seek to ensure that a person's linguistic environment is not treated as a factor affecting functional capacity, and that any "appropriate treatment" test requires treatment to be linguistically and culturally accessible at the person's geographical location. These amendments represent a minimum floor of protection. AMWA urges the Committee to recommend that these provisions be incorporated into the Bill and that the Government commit to genuine consultation with CALD communities in designing implementation.

With support from



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CALD women in Australia experience disability at significant rates, yet remain chronically underrepresented in the NDIS. Barriers to access are compounded by language and literacy challenges, cultural stigma around disability, under-documentation and delayed diagnosis — particularly for conditions that are already less recognised in clinical settings. Women from CALD communities are more likely to rely on family and community networks to navigate complex systems, and less likely to have the professional advocacy support needed to build the evidence base that NDIS eligibility and planning processes demand. The Bill's proposed reforms risk deepening this exclusion before adequate alternative supports, safeguards and culturally competent service systems exist.

AMWA's key concerns in relation to CALD women

1. Tightened eligibility will deepen CALD exclusion.

Proposed functional capacity thresholds, permanence tests and “appropriate treatment” requirements will operate in a system where CALD women already face delayed diagnosis, clinical dismissal and under-documentation. Where treatment is not available in a person's language or is culturally unsafe, it will be inaccessible in practice — yet risk being treated as “not exhausted.” Conditions disproportionately affecting women, including chronic pain, psychosocial disability, fatigue-related and trauma-related impairment, are already under-recognised; this risk is amplified for women who cannot advocate in English or who face cultural barriers to clinical engagement. AMWA strongly supports requiring that any treatment deemed “appropriate” must be demonstrably available in an accessible language and at an accessible location, consistent with Ms Le's proposed amendments.

2. Support reductions will shift unpaid care onto CALD women.

Women from CALD communities are disproportionately represented among Australia's unpaid carers. Many carry dual or triple caring responsibilities — for children with disability, ageing parents and extended community members — within kinship and community structures that are often invisible to formal service systems. When NDIS-funded supports are reduced, the need for care does not disappear; it is absorbed by these women. This affects workforce participation, financial security, mental and physical health, and community wellbeing. Reductions to social, civic and community participation supports are particularly dangerous for CALD women and people with disability, for whom community connection is often a primary safety mechanism, a lifeline for identifying service needs and a protection against violence, abuse and neglect.

3. Delegated evidence and assessment settings will entrench cultural and linguistic bias.

The Bill delegates significant decision-making power to future rules, technical advisory bodies, standardised assessment tools and automated or computer-assisted processes. AMWA is deeply concerned that these mechanisms may reproduce existing biases. CALD women with disability are under-represented in published research, have lower rates of NDIS plan utilisation — often due to service gaps rather than lower need — and are less likely to have formal documentation of functional impact in the formats assessment tools expect. Automated and formula-based systems that use historical data and peer-reviewed generalisable evidence risk treating these structural exclusions as evidence of lower need. Any Technical Advisory Group, evidence framework or assessment tool must include expertise in CALD disability experience, intersectional discrimination and culturally responsive practice, and must be tested for cultural and linguistic bias before being applied.

AMWA is also concerned about the implications of the Bill for CALD women navigating ageing and disability support pathways. Many people from CALD backgrounds experience accelerated ageing due to cumulative disadvantage, occupational hazards, delayed healthcare access and the physical toll of migration. Aged care systems are not designed to replace disability supports and frequently cannot provide the linguistically and culturally appropriate services that CALD individuals require. The Bill must not treat aged care as an adequate alternative for CALD people



who need disability-specific support, particularly where those services would not be delivered in the person's language or within their cultural framework.

AMWA respectfully urges the Committee to:

- Recommend that the Bill not proceed without a comprehensive public gender impact analysis that specifically examines the impacts on women from CALD communities;
- Require that any co-design process for NDIS reforms include the genuine, funded participation of CALD women with disability and CALD carer organisations;
- Support the incorporation of Ms Dai Le's amendments to ensure linguistic and cultural accessibility is embedded in eligibility and treatment provisions;
- Require that any future rules, assessment tools, Technical Advisory Group membership and evidence standards be tested for cultural and linguistic bias and include CALD disability expertise; and
- Ensure that no tightening of access or reduction of supports occurs until alternative systems, including linguistically and culturally accessible foundational supports, are available, tested and sufficient.

Reforms of this scale require meaningful co-design, comprehensive consultation and transparent impact analysis before legislative changes are progressed. CALD women with disability are among the most marginalised and least heard in national policy conversations and must be actively and resourced to participate in these processes. The current consultation timeframe does not enable this.

AMWA thanks the Committee for considering these concerns and welcomes continued engagement with the Committee, the Government and sector partners on these critical issues.

Yours sincerely,

Malini Raj

Executive Director

Australian Multicultural Women's Alliance (AMWA)