



Inclusive housing & quality support that are cost effective

The Summer Foundation position statement on the NDIS Review Final Report

2 February 2024

The support provided in disability housing in Australia is poor quality, expensive and becoming more costly each year. The NDIS Review recommended a suite of reforms that help ensure housing and living supports deliver better outcomes for NDIS participants and are sustainable. Achieving this vision is “critical to the scheme delivering on its promise of greater inclusion for people with disability and connection to family, friends and community.”¹

Investment in innovation and practical research is critical to inform the development of cost-effective services that deliver better outcomes for people with disability.³ Over the last decade there has been a distinct lack of innovation in disability housing and support in Australia. Outdated congregate care settings still dominate the system and the Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) market largely does not deliver housing that aligns with the needs and preferences of eligible NDIS participants. The current system of provider regulation and safeguards for NDIS participants is clearly not adequate. Many group homes operate like mini-institutions and lack the basic customer service elements that are standard in other sectors.

Ensuring housing and living supports are fit-for-purpose not only meets the needs of NDIS participants, it is also critical to overall scheme sustainability. The \$8.8 billion annual cost of support provided to the 5% of NDIS participants living in disability housing represents a quarter of total scheme payments.² Last year the cost of the support provided in disability increased 8% per person.³

While the sustainability of the NDIS depends on innovation in service delivery, there is little detail in the NDIS Review on how innovation will happen. More home and living demand data from the NDIA and increased investment in university based research alone are not going to result in the scale of transformation needed in the disability sector in Australia. Relying on market forces to deliver innovation in housing and living has not worked. NDIA initiatives have also failed to deliver innovative and inclusive housing and living options.

¹ Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet [Working together to deliver the NDIS. NDIS Review: final report | Supporting analysis](#). p.538

² Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Working together to deliver the NDIS. NDIS Review: final report | Supporting analysis. p.542

³ National Disability Insurance Agency NDIS Quarterly Report to Disability Ministers September 2023 p.54

Summer Foundation commitment

The Summer Foundation is committed to working with and for Australians with disability and government to deliver innovative solutions that improve housing and living outcomes and support the implementation of the NDIS Review Recommendations.

Genuine choice and control over living arrangements (Recommendation 8)

- We will continue to provide people with disability with the information, resources and services they need to understand their rights, understand their housing and support options and exercise real choice about where they live and whom they live with (via the [Housing Hub](#)).
- We will pilot a Home and Living peer support service that enables people with disability to access the wisdom and insights of peers.

Diverse and innovative range of inclusive housing and living supports (Recommendation 9)

- We will co-design and build a new, contemporary typology of disability housing to meet the needs of people who are missing out in the current SDA market.
- We will co-design a framework and principles to guide contemporary models of support that are bespoke to the needs and preferences of specific groups of co-located NDIS participants.
- We will explore and co-design new models of governance that increase the agency of people living in disability housing.

Inclusive new mainstream housing (Recommendation 9)

- We will continue to lead a national coalition of health, disability, housing and older persons organisations and fund the [Building Better Homes](#) campaign until there is national adoption of minimum accessible standards in new housing.
- We will work with governments to ensure the implementation of minimum accessible standards is monitored and impact is measured in each jurisdiction.

Measure what matters, build an evidence base of what works (Recommendation 23)

- We are partnering with La Trobe University to deliver a [longitudinal study](#) that is systematically investigating the experience, outcomes and economic impact of people with disability moving into a range of disability housing models.
- We will evaluate and scale an evidence based intervention ([M-ComConnect](#)) that supports people with disability to build social connection and increase their participation in the community.

Attract, retain and train a workforce that is responsive to participant needs and delivers quality supports (Recommendation 15)

- We will scale and continue to evaluate a co-designed intervention ([Participant Led Videos](#)) to improve the quality of support provided to people with disability.
- We will co-design and evaluate a range of new evidence based resources to enable people with disability to recruit, select, train and manage the performance of disability support workers.

Asks of the NDIA & federal, state & territory governments

The Summer Foundation is calling on the NDIA and federal, state and territory governments to:

Build on existing work: Make use of emerging evidence provided by research, co-design output and local and international exemplars that demonstrate innovation and potential solutions.

Scale evidence based solutions: Work with the sector to evaluate, iteratively improve and fund potential solutions at scale.

Design alternative approaches to Supported Independent Living (SIL): Work with the sector to design new evidence based funding models that drive efficient, high quality support that are tailored to the specific needs and preferences of each NDIS participant.

The Summer Foundation looks forward to working with people with disability, governments and the disability sector to deliver quality, cost effective housing and living solutions that deliver good outcomes for people with disability and the scheme. Government and disability providers have failed to innovate over the past decade. A new approach is needed. Real solutions need to reimagine these systems in partnership with people with disability, with their voices, lived experiences and expertise at the centre. “Continuing the engagement is the only way to ensure the success of these reforms and to continue to rebuild trust.”⁴

⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet [Working together to deliver the NDIS. NDIS Review: final report](#). p.23