

Participants and providers have told us about the importance of finding, recognising, and promoting new ways for participants to pursue their home and living goals.

In response we introduced a new initiative to bring participants and providers together to design and deliver improved ways of delivering home and living supports.

We call them Demonstration Projects. Demonstration projects look at different ways of delivering home and living supports that give greater flexibility to participants and providers, are outcomes-focused, encourage better practice and ensure Scheme sustainability.

## Round 1 Home and living demonstration projects

We launched a [Market Information Request](#) in September 2021 for providers to work with participants to submit a Demonstration Project they would like to test and evaluate alternative approaches in supported independent living.

We received 29 applications and used a competitive, merit-based process to select 11 projects. 5 of these projects have continued through to their implementation phase.

Each project tests a slightly different way of delivering supports and is aimed at delivering greater flexibility, improving outcomes, encouraging better practice with a focus on Scheme sustainability.

To support project implementation and evaluation, providers have received grants ranging from \$50,000 for smaller projects, to \$170,000 for larger projects.

The grants are helping to maximise the benefits of these projects for the participants involved and the broader sector through the delivery of a robust evaluation.

## Demonstration Project Overviews

### Psychosocial residential rehabilitation - Mind Australia

#### Project Design

Mind Australia is trialling the delivery of a time-limited, 12-24 month residential based recovery-orientated peer learning support program to participants with a significant psychosocial disability.

The project focuses on a personal and shared recovery model that aims to improve access to community mental health services and supports participants in developing their informal and community supports networks.

Through these measures, the project will help participants to build their capacity and confidence to transition to mainstream housing where they can achieve a greater level of independence.

## Provider Story

Mind Australia's project shows the importance of giving participants with psychosocial disability access to capacity building supports within their residential accommodation.

This complements their mental health and wellbeing supports provided by mainstream services.

This allows participants to build their capacity with the goal to move into more self-supporting accommodation.

Greater independence within the home is a key interest for participants working with Mind Australia. The project consists of a 12-24 month accommodation arrangement for up to 12 people.

It gives practical support for daily living activities and better access to mainstream community supports which helps to enhance functionality and build skills.

Key to improving functionality and wellbeing is the project's Community Mental Health Peer Practitioners.

By connecting participants with Peer Practitioners who have shared lived experience, participants see real-life examples of recovery success.

Mind Australia Executive Director, Mark Heeney says 'The introduction of recovery-oriented peer learning activities has been an essential part of the demonstration project.

By using their own experiences to support others, peer workers have helped residents build capacity, confidence and independence'.

Mind Australia says their project has continued to go through a process of reviewing, adapting, and changing as issues surface.

They work closely with participants to establish their individual support program goals and identify how these goals are best achieved by each participant based on their existing skills and circumstances.

This project gives participants the tools and resources to help identify how they can get the most out of their plan, build their capacity and achieve their goals of greater independence.

## Enhanced Practice Leader - Possability

### Project Design

Possability is trialling the use of an Enhanced Practice Leader role within supported independent living environments to improve the implementation and integration of Positive Behaviour Support Plans for participants with complex support needs.

The Enhanced Practice Leader provides supervision, real-time practice coaching and specialist advice to staff working within participants' homes.

This model ensures supports are delivered and implemented in line with the participant's individual goals and their Positive Behaviour Support Plans while also considering the ecological supports required within each home to ensure the best outcomes for all residents.

This model aims to provide better consistency and greater stability within the home for both participants and staff.

### Provider Story

Supported independent living provider Possability works with participants with complex needs.

Possability recognised the need for a highly skilled workforce to deal with a sometimes-challenging workplace.

They introduced the role of Enhanced Practice Leader.

The leader has a higher level of skills and training and takes on the day-to-day support management for participants as well as ongoing training and mentoring for staff.

They are on site every day and oversee staff to implement behaviour support plans in a consistent way. They also coordinate appointments for the participant.

Possability has found the new Enhance Practice Leaders bring more stability, skill development and community access for participants.

'We take a longer-term view and give more intense support up front,' says Cathy. 'By focusing on the participant's skill development, over time their need for supports should decline.'

Project Lead, Kathleen Connolly also reports better staff retention since the introduction.

'If staff feel supported working with people with complex needs, and have the skills needed, they will stay,' says Kathleen.

Possability's project has created stable staffing that encourages participants as well as staff's skill building.

As staff are more confident and can access quick support from the Enhanced Practice Leader, they respond better to participants' changing needs.

Quick coordination also means participants in the project have been accessing medical appointments quicker when needed.

## Active Support and Practice Leadership – Rocky Bay

### Project Design

Rocky Bay is working in partnership with Latrobe University to implement an Active Support and Frontline Practice Leadership Model.

The Active Support and Frontline Practice Leadership Model, featured in the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's recent [Own Motion: Inquiry into aspects of supported accommodation](#) (January 2023), seeks to empower participants to decide how they live and the level of support they receive.

Staff will receive training on empowering participants to exercise their 'choice and control' to become more independent within the home environment.

They will provide 'just the right amount' of support and guidance, enabling participants to complete tasks autonomously in a safe and supported environment.

### Provider Story

According to Cheryl Lockwood, Service Improvement Manager, Supported Accommodation with Perth-based supported independent living provider Rocky Bay, their project is about improving

quality of service.

‘We wanted to give participants more choice and control over many aspects of their daily lives,’ says Cheryl.

Rocky Bay’s project involves working within the parameters of a participant budget whilst embedding and implementing active support in the home.

Eight houses are included in this project which follows strict research standards that, on conclusion, will give useful de-identified data to the NDIS on the impacts of implementing an active support model.

The projects participants are predominately individuals with an intellectual disability. Research shows that people with an intellectual disability often feel excluded from decision-making processes, requiring external facilitation to engage and support their inclusion.

Without this support, they become disengaged.

Active Support helps to empower and encourage participants to engage more in life and to make choices and decisions.

Staff are learning to give participants just the right amount of support and guidance, enabling them to participate in tasks like cooking and laundry in a safe and supported environment.

‘All staff are being trained in a different service delivery model that’s about doing with and not doing for, where every moment has potential to engage participants to be included in everyday activities of life.’

‘Our team leaders have a key role in this project,’ says Cheryl. ‘As leaders and mentors to staff, they will guide this process within each house. They understand the capability of individual staff and finding the best ways to use their talents in this project.’

‘Our project aims to implement and embed active support in the houses we operate. Once embedded, we hope the approach will be adopted in other areas of our business.’ says Cheryl’.

## **Family Governance Cooperative – Supporting Independent Living Cooperative (SILC)**

## Project Design

Supporting Independent Living Cooperative (SILC) seek to demonstrate how SILC work with families and people with disability to co-design home and living solutions to best meet the person's needs.

SILC does this through the set-up of family governed cooperatives, which are operated by families of people with disability.

SILC's model recognises that people with disability with their families, are in the best position to make decisions about where they live, who they live with, and who supports them.

The project will observe how SILC co-design the home and living solution to best meet the person's needs, and as a result, optimising outcomes in the person's social, community and living environments.

## Provider Story

Supporting Independent Living Cooperative's (SILC) model was inspired by its founder Steve Anthony's experience seeking accommodation for his son Patrick who has autism and an intellectual disability.

Steve found the choices made led to poor quality of life for his son with a lack of consistency and choice in routine and disengagement from his community.

As a result, Steve worked with government to set up a pilot family-governed accommodation model. It was a way to deliver supported independent living accommodation services that give more choice to people with high complex support needs.

This included choice over where they live, who they live with, who supports them and when, to achieve a good quality of life.

At the centre is a community approach and collaboration with families. While SILC, as the secondary cooperative, provides the back of house support and connections, families form the primary cooperative, a legal entity of its own.

The families co-design services, decide on the roster of care, and choose the staff members most suited to the person in their care.

'That's why we set up (our legal structure) as a cooperative' says Angela Yee, CEO of SILC. 'It's about everybody coming together, co-designing and essentially cooperating to come up with the best

solution for people with disability.'

The model first tries to understand the individual's needs and what their best life would look like at home. Only then does financial modelling come into the picture.

SILC's model leverages off community and natural assets available to families.

This might include private rental subsidy and other government services. This ensures the participant fully accesses all resources available.

Angela says 'Get the voices of people with lived experience of disability, put yourself in their shoes.

Governance arrangements, at the top level, need to have people who can speak about their own lived experience to help the organisation make the right decisions for the people we are serving.

'You have to be a learning organisation. It should always be about how we can do better next time and improve for the benefit of our residents.'

## Transiting from supported independent living to independent living – We Care NSW

### Project Design

We Care NSW is working with a small number of participants with an identified goal of transitioning from supported independent living to more independent living arrangements within the community through intentional capacity-building programs inside and outside of the home environment.

We Care NSW are doing this by creating individual care teams for participants who will help them in implementing evidence-informed, co-designed intensive skill building plans tailored to the participant's individual needs and circumstances.

These plans are implemented as a part of the participant's everyday life which allows capacity to be built naturally within the home and community over time.

### Provider Story

'A more innovative way of delivering accommodation and supports' is how Nicky Johnson, Community Services Manager with We Care NSW describes their project.

The Aboriginal owned and operated NSW-based supported independent living provider works primarily with Aboriginal participants that have a psychosocial disability.

They developed their project after identifying a gap where traditional shared supported independent living models do not always meet participant aspirations and goals to be independent

'We wanted to find a more innovative way of delivering accommodation and community supports that build participant capacity,' says Nicky.

'Our project works with a small number of participants with an identified goal of transitioning from supported independent living to more independent living arrangements within the community through intentional capacity-building programs inside and outside the home environment.'

'Our project model is to help build participant capacity so they can aspire to become independent.'

We Care Director, Todd Heard says their project is about providing choice. 'The way we deliver supports can't remain static,' he says. 'It needs to be able to change through the life of the participant's plan.'

The project looks to develop a framework for a dialogue with participants.

It aims to create a tool with a shared language that other providers can use, that benchmarks wellbeing, determines objective measures and most importantly builds participant capacity.

Todd says the project is partly inspired by the Close the Gap commitments and thinking how We Care can contribute to improving the lives of Indigenous Australians.

'Our project promotes independence and capacity building for our participants. It provides a safe environment to test new ways of doing things.'

## Research and Evaluation

The NDIA is monitoring the Round 1 Home and Living Demonstration Projects outcomes. These projects are closing in June 2024.

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## Will there be further 'rounds' of demonstration projects?

In October 2023, the NDIA announced the successful organisations of the Round two demonstration project, 'Empowering Participants: Information, Assistance and Connections' grant round.

These organisations will test and evaluate different models for providing NDIS participants with high quality information, assistance and connections about home and living options.

More information regarding this demonstration rounds projects can be found on the webpage [Home and living demonstration projects - round 2 | NDIS](#)

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