



2022

NATIONAL DISABILITY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

Preliminary Research Agenda
SUMMARY

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NDRP Research Agenda

The NDRP research agenda is being developed to guide the allocation of research funding by the NDRP over a ten-year time period.

It will provide the foundation for the NDRP to deliver on its vision to facilitate a collaborative and inclusive disability research program that builds evidence for successful policy and practice.

What is the NDRP research agenda?

Once complete, the NDRP Research Agenda will outline the broad areas and suggested but not exhaustive research questions that are relevant to the disability community. These broad areas and potential research questions will guide how the NDRP research funding is spent. The research agenda is designed to:

- Align with the NDRP Guiding Principles (see page 3)
- Advance Australia's capacity to meet its obligations as a signatory to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCPRD)
- Align with major policies such as the Australian Disability Strategy and other research agendas
- Encourage research focused on disability policy and practice
- Be flexible to respond to emerging priorities while also keeping the long-term, big picture priorities

Preliminary research agenda

What we have now is a preliminary research agenda that draws on findings from a three-phase agenda setting research project, and maps them to Australia's Disability Strategy outcome areas and policy priorities to reach a preliminary list of themes and topics.

The preliminary research agenda will be made available for further consultation in the coming months.

Agenda setting research project

We commissioned the University of Sydney, together with a large group of researchers and community organisations to look at research gaps and ask the disability community about research priorities.

The agenda setting research involved three phases:

- Mapping recent Australian research related to people with disability
- Consult with people with disability and a range of other stakeholders to identify key issues
- Synthesise and refine findings from the first two phases.

Read the reports (including easy read summary) at this link: [agenda setting project](#)

If you are interested in reading more about the context, background and how this preliminary research agenda has been developed, you can read the full report at this link: [preliminary research agenda report](#)

Guiding Principles

1

High quality, collaborative research

- Become a world-leading driver of disability research that builds an evidence base
- Advance disability research in Australia by delivering on the National Disability Research Agenda
- Draw on expertise across Australia through collaborative research teams
- Australian policy to be informed by research and evidence

2

People with disability at the centre

- Inclusive research by and with people with disability who hold genuine decision making power
- Genuine, paid for, co-design with people with disability
- Research that addresses the priorities of people with disability
- Research that specifically addresses people with disability who:
 - require support to express their will and preference, and to implement their decisions
 - experience intersectional disadvantage

3

Value all forms of knowledge

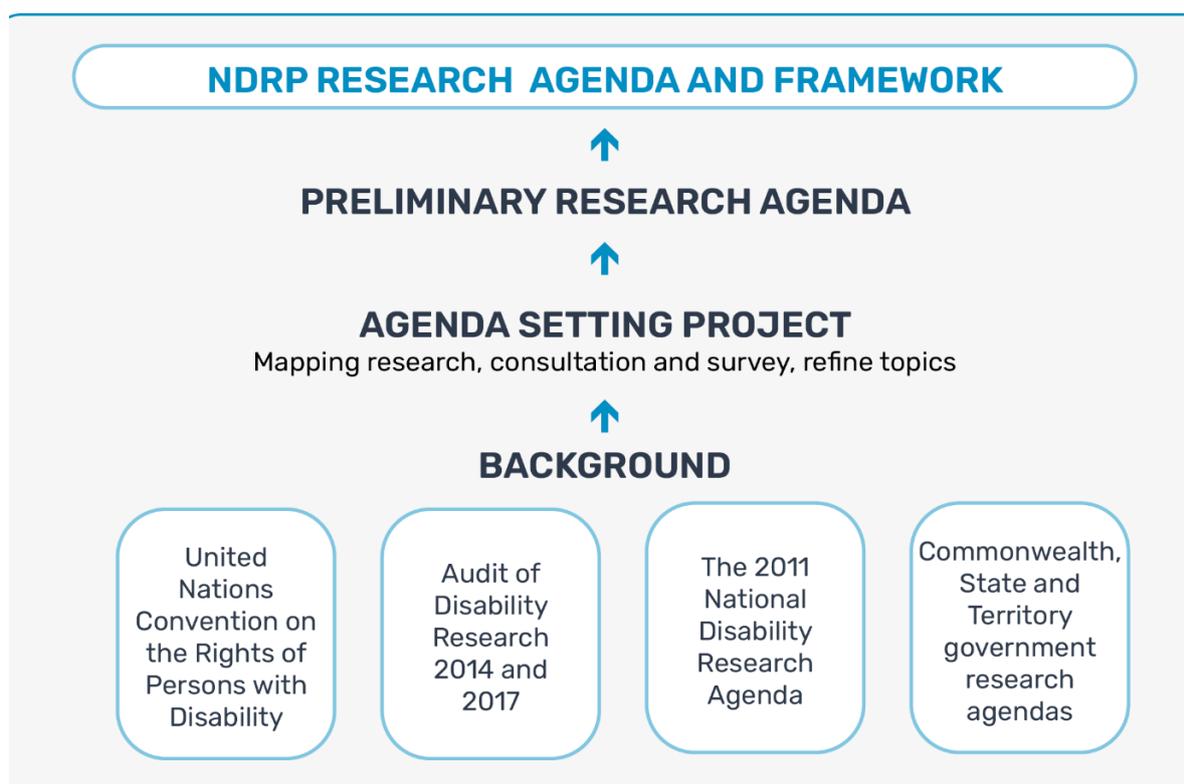
- Recognise and value the knowledge that people with disability contribute to research based on their lived experience
- Respect for different sources and forms of knowledge
- Make knowledge accessible to the community in a range of formats

4

Build research capacity

- Build effective, system-wide disability research capacity
- Create career pathways and targeted support for researchers with disability
- Build capacity of the disability sector to create and use knowledge

Preliminary Research Agenda structured around Australia's Disability Strategy



As the NDRP Research Agenda will seek to support the aspirations and implementation of the Australian Disability Strategy (ADS), we used the outcome areas and priorities of the ADS to organise the NDRP preliminary research agenda.

Initial consultations held during the agenda setting research project identified four areas where research is needed:

- Research about making services better;
- Research about different experiences of people with disability in Australia;
- Research about how systems can support people better; and
- Research about improving mental health and well being.

Australia's Disability Strategy outcome areas are:

- Employment and Financial Security
- Inclusive Homes and Communities
- Safety, Rights and Justice
- Personal and Community Support
- Education and Learning
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Attitudes

The following section maps the research topics identified in the agenda setting research project to ADS outcome areas.

Outcome Area 1: Employment and financial security

People with disability have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives

Policy priority 1: Increase employment of people with disability

Preliminary research topics:

- Adjustments and accommodations
- Improving services and supports working
- Overcoming barriers to employment
- Making workplaces more inclusive
- Enabling people with intellectual disability to find and maintain employment
- Career pathways and leadership positions for people with disability
- Challenging and shifting community attitudes towards employment of people with disability

Policy priority 2: Improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment

Preliminary research topics:

- NDIS supports for participants after they leave school
- Positive transitions from education to employment

Policy priority 3: Strengthen financial independence of people with disability

No research questions from the Consortium's work specifically aligned with this policy priority area.

Outcome Area 2: Inclusive homes and communities

People with disability live in inclusive, accessible and well-designed homes and communities

Policy priority 1: Increase the availability of affordable housing

Preliminary research topics

- Housing security and affordability
- Preventing homelessness for people with disability
- Knowledge, skills and attitudes of public housing staff working with people with disability
- Market factors and access to affordable housing for people with disability

Policy priority 2: Housing is accessible and people with disability have choice and control about where they live, who they live with, and who comes into their home

- Supports that enable people with disability to live independently
- Housing models that promote inclusion of people with disability with mental health issues
- Outcomes of different housing models such as semi-institutional, supported independent living and customised options such as Individualised Living Options

Policy priority 3: People with disability are able to fully participate in social, recreational, religious and cultural life

- Social and economic benefits of full inclusion of people with disability

Policy priority 4: The built and natural environment is accessible

- Physical environment enabling people with disability to participate in society on an equal basis to others
- Inclusive design practices, supports and regulations to support people with disability to access public spaces
- Impact of place and geography (urban, regional, rural, remote)

Policy priority 5: Transport systems are accessible for the whole community

- Motor vehicle restraint options (harnesses) to protect children with disability from injury
- Addressing transport needs of children and adults with disability

Policy priority 6: Information and communication systems are accessible, reliable and responsive

- Building capacity for Auslan interpreters
- Enabling people with communication difficulties to participate in society and receive the services and supports they need (health, legal, disability, education, employment)

Outcome Area 3: Safety, rights and justice

The rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and protected, and people with disability feel safe and enjoy equality before the law.

Policy priority 1: People with disability are safe and feel safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation

Preliminary research topics

- Reducing family violence against women and girls with disability
- Reducing violence and abuse against people with disability in institutional settings and practices
- Supporting children and young people as they transition to adulthood and develop their sexuality. Developing positive relationships
- Policies, practices and strategies that ensure that people with communication difficulties are safe from violence, abuse and neglect

Policy priority 2: Policies, processes and programs provide better responses to people with disability who have experienced trauma

- Policies, practices and strategies to support First Nations Australians with disability who have experienced trauma

Policy priority 3: Policies, processes and programs for people with disability promote gender equality and prevent violence against groups at heightened risk, including women and their children

- Effective services, systems and policies to prevent violence and abuse against people with disability

Policy priority 4: The rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and protected

- Effectiveness and reform of guardianship systems upholding and protecting the rights of people with disability
- Models of supported decision-making enable people with disability to exercise their rights
- Effectiveness and reform of systems for substitutes decision-making protecting and upholding the rights of people with disability
- Developing capacity for self-advocacy of people with disability
- Supporting people with disability to make decisions about their own end of life care
- Understanding to what extent people with disability have their human rights upheld in Australia, and how this can be improved.

Policy priority 5: People with disability have equal access to justice

- Understanding if Australia's legal and justice uphold the rights of people with disability and how to optimise this

Policy priority 6: The criminal justice system responds effectively to the complex needs and vulnerabilities of people with disability

- Understanding the experiences of people with intellectual disability with the legal and criminal justice system: Are their rights being upheld? What are the impacts of these experiences on people with intellectual disability?

Outcome Area 4: Personal and community support

People with disability have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and engage in their communities

Policy priority 1: People with disability are able to access supports that meet their needs

Preliminary research topics

- Designing systems so people with disability don't 'fall through the cracks'? (e.g., between health and disability services systems, education, and disability).
- Accessing services and supports across systems such as disability and health, education, justice, and education
- Better integrating services systems
- Adapting services and supports across the life course and transitions to different life stages (e.g., moving out of home)
- Best supports for children with disability in out of home care
- Best supports for older Australians with disability

Policy priority 2: The NDIS provides eligible people with permanent and significant disability with access to reasonable and necessary disability supports

- Designing and implementing the NDIS to achieve the best outcomes for people with disability
- Impacts of services and supports funded through the NDIS
- Innovative practice in disability services and supports
- Impact of NDIS supports on NDIS participants after they leave school
- Outcomes of different housing models such as semi-institutional, supported independent living and customised options such as Individualised Living Options
- Social and economic costs and benefits of the NDIS on participants, families and society
- Alignment of expectations of people with disability prior to the NDIS with their experiences
- Barriers to community participation for NDIS participants
- Equity of the NDIS: Are people who are better able to advocate faring better?
- Experiences of people with psychosocial disability in accessing and managing NDIS services and supports
- Experiences of people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in accessing and managing NDIS supports
- Avoidable hospitalisations and NDIS supports
- Improving interactions between the NDIS and health and education systems
- Disability support workers and their economic contribution to the community

Policy priority 3: The role of informal support is acknowledged and supported

- Supporting parents, siblings, other family members and allies to provide supports to the people with disability they care for

- Tracking long term health and financial impacts of caring on carers, including between generations on sibling carers
- Understanding financial circumstances of families and the financial impacts of caring on ageing carers, particularly women

Policy priority 4: People with disability are supported to access assistive technology

- Best use of assistive technology for living independently and participating in society on an equal basis to others. Making assistive technology affordable and accessible
- New advances and innovations in assistive technology

Outcome Area 5: Education and learning

People with disability achieve their full potential through education and learning

Policy priority 1: Children with disability can access and participate in high-quality early childhood education and care

Preliminary research topic

- Improving policies and practices to best support children with disability in early childhood education and care

Policy priority 2: Build capability in the delivery of inclusive education to improve educational outcomes for school students with disability

- Supports and reasonable adjustments for students with disability
- Improving policies and practices to best support students with disability
- Teachers promoting independence for students with disability across many areas of life
- Understanding the major problems with the education system and the impact on transition to further training and education
- Modifying assessment practices so students with disability are not disadvantaged
- Improving interactions between the NDIS and health and education systems

Policy priority 3: Improve pathways and accessibility to further education and training for people with disability

- Supports and reasonable adjustments for students with disability
- Improving policies and practices to best support students with disability
- Understanding experiences of First Nations Australians with disability and Australians with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in tertiary education
- Creating a more responsive tertiary sector through storytelling and voices of students with disability
- Effective teaching practices in TAFEs and universities for supporting students with disability
- Modifying assessment practices so students with disability are not disadvantaged
- Impact of NDIS supports on NDIS participants after they leave school

Policy priority 4: People with disability have increased opportunities to participate in accessible and inclusive lifelong learning

- Improving policies and practices to best support students with disability

Outcome Area 6: Health and wellbeing

People with disability attain the highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives

Policy priority 1: All health service providers have the capabilities to meet the needs of people with disability

Preliminary research topic

- Improving perceptions of health care providers towards people with disability

Policy priority 2: Prevention and early intervention health services are timely, comprehensive, appropriate and effective to support better overall health and wellbeing

- Avoidable hospitalisations and NDIS supports
- Improving interactions between the NDIS and health and education systems
- Understanding the experiences of people with disability with the health system
- Overcoming barriers to accessing mainstream health services

Policy priority 3: Mental health supports and services are appropriate, effective and accessible for people with disability

- Best mental health supports for people with intellectual disability
- Best mental health supports for young people with disability
- Improving interactions between the NDIS and health and education systems
- Overcoming barriers to accessing mainstream health services
- Improving the competency of mental health service providers to provide services for people with disability

Policy priority 4: Disaster preparedness, risk management plans and public emergency responses are inclusive of people with disability, and support their physical and mental health, and wellbeing

- Understanding the experiences of people with disability during COVID-19 and learnings for future health system reform
- Understanding and preparing for the impact of climate change on people with disability

Outcome Area 7: Community attitudes

Community attitudes support equality, inclusion and participation in society for people with disability

Policy priority 1: Employers value the contribution people with disability make to the workforce, and recognise the benefits of employing people with disability

Preliminary research topic

- Challenging and shifting community attitudes towards employment of people with disability

Policy priority 2: Key professional workforces are able to confidently and positively respond to people with disability

- Improving perceptions of health care providers towards people with disability
- Knowledge, skills and attitudes of public housing staff working with people with disability

Policy priority 3: Increase representation of people with disability in leadership roles

Preliminary research topics

- Career pathways and leadership for people with disability
- Supporting people with disability to assume leadership positions

Policy priority 4: Improving community attitudes to positively impact on Policy Priorities under the Strategy

Preliminary research topics

- Understanding experiences of discrimination of people with invisible disability, people with mental health problems and people with intellectual disability
- Improving society's understanding of the strengths of people with disability and how they contribute to the community
- Understanding strategies that will shift community attitudes to be inclusive

What's next?

This list of research questions aligned with ADS outcome areas and policy priorities forms the preliminary research agenda. Through a consultation and engagement process this list will be modified and expanded; stakeholders will be asked what's missing and if anything should be worded differently. The revised list will be organised into broad areas of priority

topics with suggested although not exhaustive research questions to underpin the 10 year NDRP Research Agenda.

If you are interested in being involved in consultations to develop the NDRP Research Agenda and Framework, register your interest here: [contact NDRP](#)





THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

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