



A Home for Living

Specialist Disability Accommodation
Innovation Plan

ndis



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Document Purpose

This is the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) plan for stimulating the innovation needed so Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) eligible participants have access to homes for living, rather than just places where services happen.

The purpose of the SDA Innovation Plan (the plan) is to start a conversation about:

- the sorts of homes that participants with SDA funding need and prefer
- the conditions that will support innovation and foster change in the supply of and demand for SDA
- the role participants, the NDIA and other stakeholders can take in driving this change.

The SDA Innovation Plan Objectives

The SDA Innovation Plan will see:

- individual participant preferences and decisions driving quality, innovation and location
- providers and industry supported to innovate and transform a sector of traditional group homes to buildings that are both indistinguishable from and intermingled with housing in the neighbourhood
- leadership in housing design that promotes independence and community inclusion and moves away from high numbers of residents living together
- the NDIA engaging with participants, providers and investors on matters relating to SDA market innovation
- SDA housing combined with individualised support that builds participant capacity towards longer-term outcomes for social and economic participation.



A Home for Living

Growing choice and control through Specialist Disability Accommodation

The United Nations Convention recognises the right of people with disabilities to choose where and with whom they live. Organisations throughout Australia, including the NDIA, have been working toward breaking down barriers and enabling this right to choose for people with disabilities.

Our home and living arrangements can exert a great influence on our quality of life. Weighing up alternatives and making decisions on where we want to live may be influenced by:

- how close we want to live to friends and family
- where our children can go to school
- whether we can find work nearby or closeness to transport options
- the type of community we want to live in, and
- whether we can access public spaces, activities and services.

A well-designed home in the right location can allow for more independent living arrangements, increased community connection and access to informal supports.

Too many people with disability live in housing which they have had little control over, and in places or with people they did not choose. Some participants currently live in housing that was never intended for them, such as young people in residential aged care or large group homes.

A range of actions are needed to provide greater choice, and ensure future housing supply is accessible and meets the needs and expectations

of all Australians, including people with disability.

Part of this action involves the provision of Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) to participants with a significant functional impairment, and/or very high support needs under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). SDA funding is designed to enable new and innovative housing options to grow and transform old models of housing based on new patterns of participant demand.

The NDIA and SDA

SDA is intended to provide eligible participants with housing that increases their independence and maximises social and economic participation, whilst delivering value for money. The NDIA continues to improve how SDA is funded and delivered to achieve these objectives. This includes making it simpler to assess eligibility for SDA and providing funding upfront in participant plans. The use of new SDA design standards, revised prices to better account for location or costs assumptions, market monitoring and sharing more data will also increase the confidence of the developing SDA market.

The NDIA has also established an SDA Reference Group comprising representation from participants, providers, investors and other key stakeholders, as a way to proactively engage on market development.

‘Choice is being asked what kind of house and amenities I need to best suit my needs.’

– Participant

The role of SDA and need for innovation

While the NDIA approach to funding SDA offers more choice and flexibility than ever before, this does not guarantee a diverse or progressive supply. Innovation can work as a driver of transformational change in SDA by ensuring that:

- housing enables participants to receive support that maximises independence and inclusion in the community
- the SDA marketplace is competitive within the broader housing market and investment flows to the areas of greatest need for change.

Innovation is an iterative process that requires identification of existing innovation, and development and testing of new ideas. Therefore, the plan takes a phased approach to implementation over the next 18 months.

The activities in this plan will be enabled and supported by:

- other NDIA SDA reform initiatives
- growing contemporary models of support and Individual Living Options (ILO)
- specific engagement strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and rural and remote communities
- progress being made in accessible housing by the Australian Building Codes Board.

SDA Snapshot



Figure 1.1: Number of participants with SDA in their NDIS plans

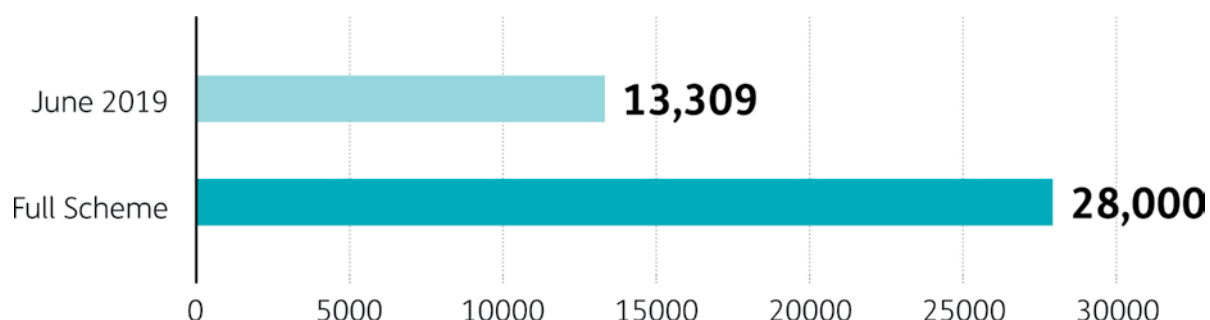


Figure 1.2: Expected growth in percentage of SDA-funded participants



Figure 1.3: SDA expenditure as a total of Scheme expenditure

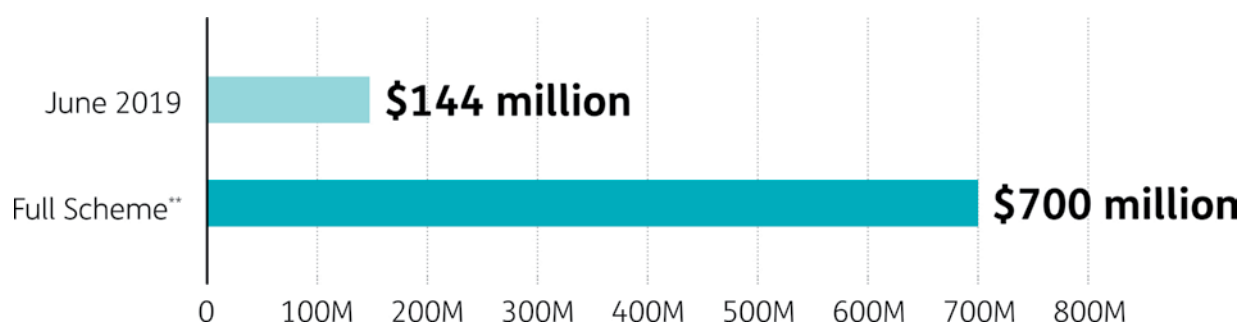




Figure 1.4: SDA expenditure as a percentage of Scheme expenditure

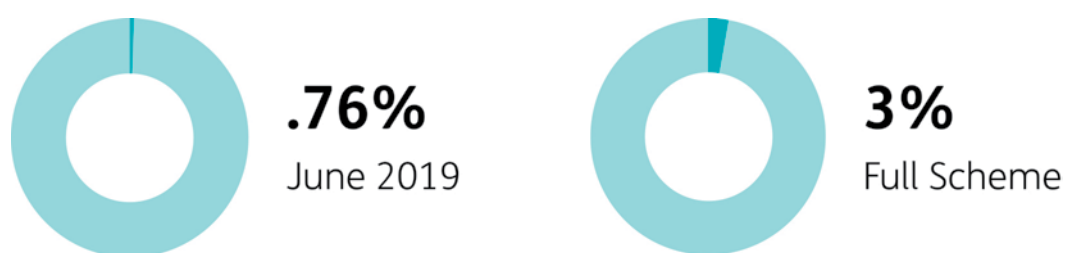


Figure 1.5: Number of enrolled SDA dwellings by location and maximum number of residents as at 30 June 2019*

We expect participants' preferences for SDA will move towards smaller house sizes. Some existing SDA will need to be renewed based on age and demand for different housing types.

Maximum number of residents	1	2	3	4	5	6+	Total
ACT	1	1	0	2	3	0	7
NSW	244	206	94	249	501	56	1,350
NT	1	14	1	3	7	3	29
QLD	172	93	75	70	31	39	480
SA	145	289	122	98	78	12	744
TAS	6	10	4	12	0	3	35
VIC	121	87	53	36	139	84	520
WA	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
Total	690	705	349	470	759	197	3170

*This data does not include in-kind arrangements or SDA that are yet to be enrolled.
The NDIS rollout schedule and historical state/territory spending on larger form dwellings distort the data.

Working together

New ideas and innovation in SDA will be realised by engaging with a broad range of disability and non-disability sector stakeholders.

A primary focus is to ensure participants lead the change. Participants will be involved in all activities and, where necessary, we will help build their capacity to be a change-maker.

The NDIA has a role to play in encouraging participants and providers to consider the widest range of possible products and services to realise the objectives of the Scheme.

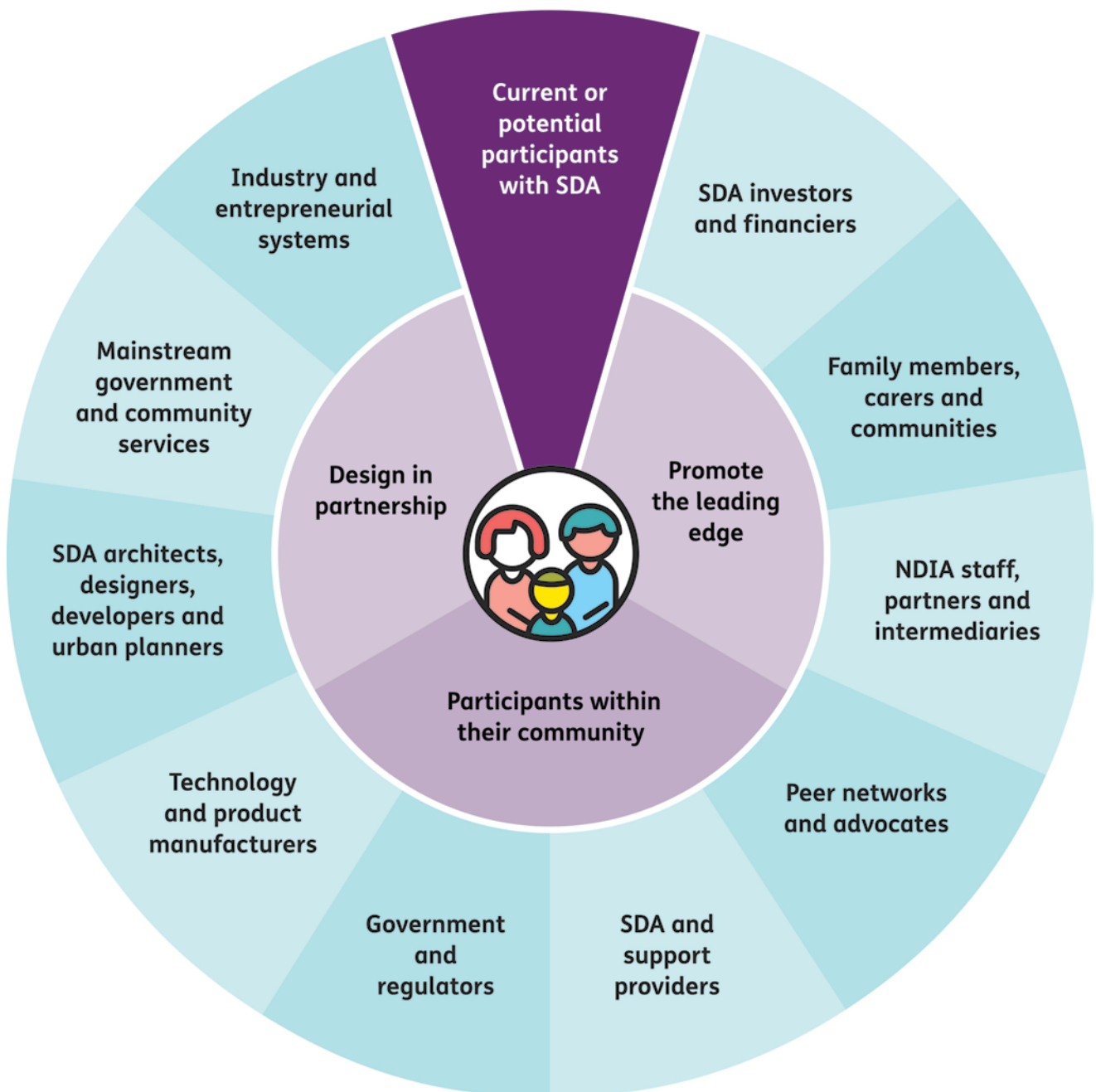
The SDA Innovation Plan aims to:

- increase awareness of the transformation needed in disability housing and living supports
- promote the benefits of SDA innovation on participant outcomes
- remove barriers to the adoption of inclusive and innovative models and;
- keep pace with emerging ideas.

We are clear that innovation in SDA needs to build participant independence, promote opportunities for social and economic participation, and align with our insurance approach as documented in our Corporate Plan.



Building an SDA Innovation Network

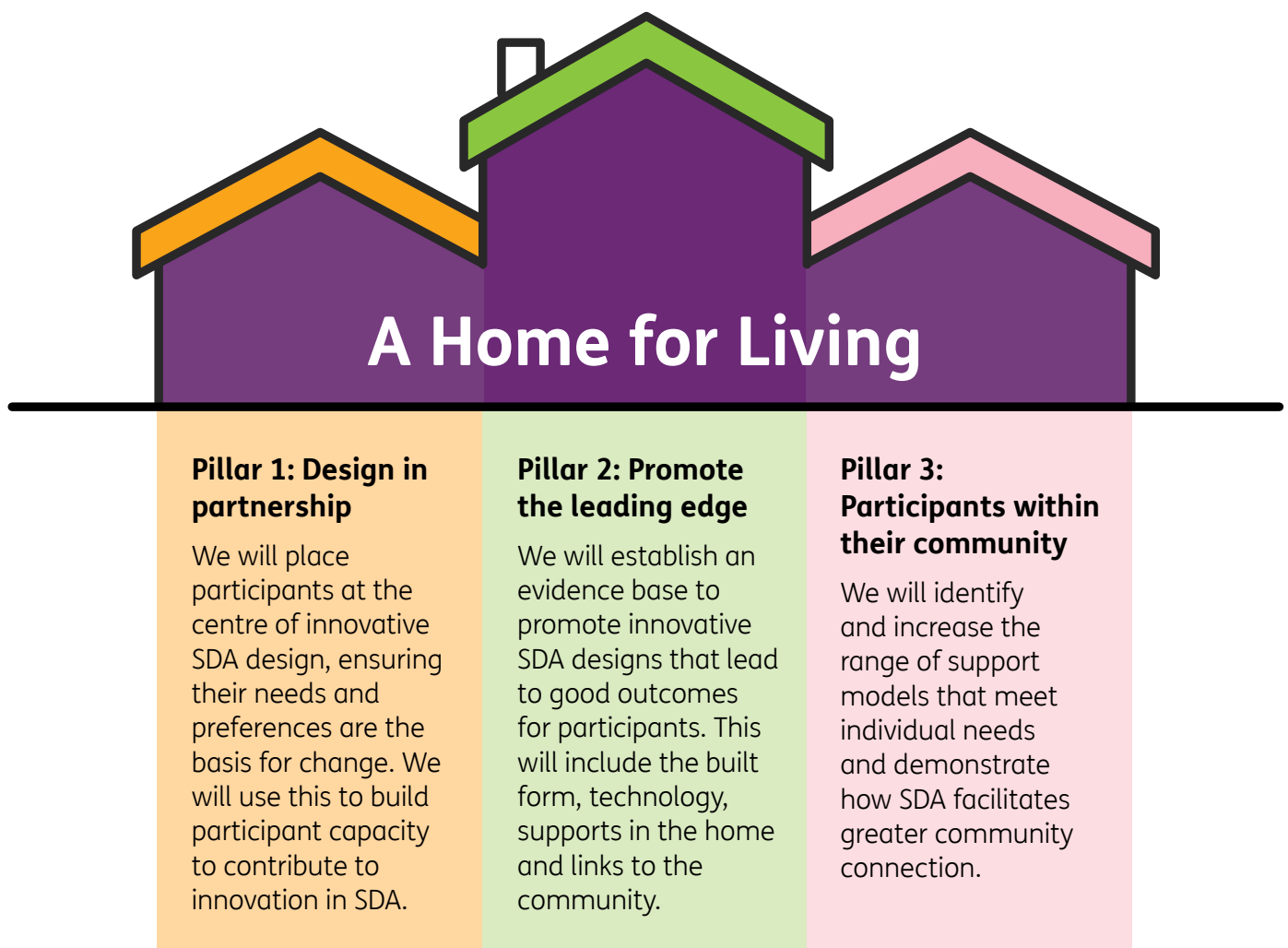




Pillars of the SDA Innovation Plan

The SDA Innovation Plan is built upon three pillars that support the principles of participant-driven design, inclusivity, and the right of people with disability to choose where and with whom they live.

These three pillars work together to achieve the vision for 'A Home for Living', and activities under the SDA Innovation Plan. In the first phase we will work with stakeholders to create an evaluation approach to effectively assess the work delivered.



Pillar 1: Design in partnership

We will place participants at the centre of innovative SDA design, ensuring their needs and preferences are the basis for change. We will use this to build participant capacity to contribute to innovation in SDA.

Goals:

- **Increase in diversity of SDA options being chosen by participants**
- **SDA providers work with participants in the design of SDA**

Reason for pillar:

Participants are limited in their ability to drive or influence innovative SDA designs

Given their personal investment in the long-term outcomes created by quality and innovative SDA models, innovation is best guided by participants. Participants need to feel supported in developing a housing vision that promotes independence and community inclusion.

This means improving the quality of information and support provided to participants and targeting engagement strategies according to their characteristics and circumstances. For example, this might include pathways to SDA for young people in nursing homes, or the involvement of peer and advocacy networks for people in group homes or with individuals who require decision-making support.

Increasing information about the housing and living preferences of participants will ensure SDA providers can deliver homes which support participant goals and keep pace with emerging trends.

To support this pillar, the NDIA commits to:

- a strategy to strengthen the voice of participants in SDA
- communication activities, products and events developed through consultation with participants, peer networks and advocacy groups
- capacity building of NDIA staff, partners and support coordinators to support participant goal setting and review, with a focus on preparation for and/or delivery of a change in home and supports
- growing NDIA understanding of participant location, home and living preferences and requirements, and sharing this information as part of the SDA Data Release Plan.

‘I want to have a say in where I live, how I live, and the type of people I live around. The only thing that is considered right now is if I can get in and if I can get around. I would like a bigger stake in the decision-making process.’

– Participant



1 Case study

Design in partnership – a home for Sharon

‘It’s not rocket science, it’s just good design’ says Robert Hannaford when talking about developing innovative SDA.

With several decades experience working in the disability housing sector Mr Hannaford is now Director of registered SDA provider, Disability Accommodation Australia. He is also a Liveable Housing Australia Assessor, based in Brisbane.

Engaging the market was essential in developing a new approach to the SDA, says Mr Hannaford, ‘we talked to the market and said here is this new segment and its disability housing and we need to look at it differently.’

Mr Hannaford worked with local organisations, builders and architects in a partnership committed to creating suitable innovative SDA design.

Sharon Boyce is an SDA participant with high level complex needs and is excited by the opportunity of working together to develop new SDA design.

‘I want to push the ideas of specialist disability accommodation and the importance of

supporting a person’s life, like me, with specific needs and how that can make such a difference to them living their best life,’ said Ms Boyce.

‘I want a place that works, gives me independence and celebrate technology through innovative SDA.

‘I want the most cutting edge technology to be able to show other people what might work and how they can live and do things they thought they could never do and still be in their own home,’ she said.

For Mr Hannaford understanding the client’s needs is the first step in developing new SDA. He says going into the participant’s home helps him understand what is actually needed.

‘Once we sit down with the person, their Mum, Dad, the occupational therapist, the siblings, the support team I get an idea of what the house needs to look like.’

‘This is an individual-focused approach that could not be achieved with generically built housing,’ said Mr Hannaford.

Pillar 2: Promote the leading edge

We will establish an evidence base to promote innovative SDA designs that lead to good outcomes for participants. This will include the built form, technology, supports in the home and links to the community.

Goals:

- **Increased proportion of developments and investments are demand-driven**
- **A growing culture of innovative outcomes-based thinking**

Reason for pillar:

The immaturity of the SDA market means that the concept of innovation in SDA is not understood or well linked to participant outcomes.

The SDA model has the potential for global leadership for accessible and inclusive housing designs and supports for people with a disability that have extreme impairment or high support needs.

Investment in innovation should be evidence-based and directed towards areas where change is needed but not naturally emerging. It is also important to celebrate current examples of innovation that are enabling participants to achieve their goals.

The SDA design categories form a minimum standard for SDA design and provide a useful starting point for considering how innovation can support development of models to meet various functional needs (i.e. the 'Robust' design category, one of the four categories of SDA design).

Overall, there is a need for better understanding and promotion of the diversity required with SDA solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, CALD communities, LGBTIQ+

communities, specific disability needs, and those living in rural or remote locations where housing options may be limited.

Research will also explore how SDA:

- integrates technology and support models including reducing the need for other supports
- physically sits within its community
- works alongside mainstream services and community infrastructure to improve achievement of goals.

To support this pillar, the NDIA commits to:

- conducting a review of the research literature and an environmental scan of current research, then releasing the findings via the NDIA website
- commencing work on a research plan that addresses gaps in meeting diverse participant needs, understanding physical design and location, and the opportunities provided by technology
- creating an Innovation Design Challenge that gives importance to participant views and ideas on innovative SDA design
- facilitating information through networks, showcase events and considering an awards program in partnership with participants, providers and stakeholders.



2 Case study

Inclusive and adaptable design

Brett Hanna is CEO of Regional Housing Limited (RHL) in Bundaberg, Queensland, an organisation that develops and manages a range of innovative SDA.

‘Our market research showed that people didn’t want to feel they were living in a gated community and instead wanted to live in a typical neighbourhood with people from all walks of life. Our low density duplex model with its carefully considered design looks more like a house than a set of units from the street’, Mr Hanna said.

‘Our design theory is all about bringing together greater accessibility, innovative design and true adaptability. Assistive technology infrastructure is included at the build stage ensuring our properties are suited to a wide range of individual needs, reducing modification costs.’

‘We wanted people to have the latest technology in their homes, giving them the ability to control their environment from anywhere in the dwelling via a customised interface with optional voice and/or visual recognition systems.’

The SDA model has allowed RHL to push the boundaries of innovation and infrastructure to truly meet participant needs.

‘The combination of SDA with innovation design and technology is leading to greater independence and improved quality of life for residents in our homes’, said Brett.

Pillar 3: Participants within their community

We will identify and increase the range of support models that meet individual needs and demonstrate how SDA facilitates greater community connection.

Goals:

- **Increased diversity in support models for participants living in SDA**
- **Greater community integration facilitated by SDA houses**

Reason for pillar:

Unnecessary prescription or an absence of policy is stopping varied or innovative responses to living supports within SDA.

Individualised funding, and separation of living supports from housing supports, means that participants can have greater choice of providers, and can arrange their own approach to home, living and being in the community. SDA should complement and promote a wide range of support and living options. This includes participant's choice to live with others who do not have a disability, and options that best maintain relationships and connection with the community. Clarity on the range of supports available will empower participants to choose home and living options that are closer to community norms.

SDA also provides a catalyst for change in the disability market through:

- development that considers mixed tenancy approaches
- aesthetic appeal and street integration, and
- proximity of social or community infrastructure that affects individual outcomes (i.e. amenities, educational institutions, and spaces that facilitate cultural and spiritual life).

These factors not only lead to a better quality of life but also disrupt traditional disability housing models and contribute to long-term use of an SDA property.

To support this pillar, the NDIA commits to:

- releasing a policy and funding model for Individual Living Options
- showcasing models that participants identify as providing holistic responses to living a life of their own choice
- sharing information on inclusive design, support and community responses beyond the disability sector
- releasing participant preference data that may inform any future geospatial mapping of important infrastructure when building SDA.

3

Case study

Shania lives her own life in a new accessible share house

Shania 18, is moving into a four-bedroom suburban home, in Melbourne's north. She will share with two other females.

From the outside, the Roxburgh Park home looks like any other in its estate. It has a wide driveway for appropriate access, ramps and parking out the front.

Positioned across the road from a park, the estate has paved footpaths so Shania can wheel around the neighbourhood if she chooses.

The house, built to Australian Accessible Living standards, is also close to a bus stop, local shops, a shopping centre and train station. No one would ever know it was SDA, designed and built with the latest assistive technology to house complex high needs NDIS participants.

Inside, doorways are wider; wheelchairs have under-bench access; the doorbell has a camera so occupants can see who is there, and linked to their device, they can open the front door without going there to let people in.

The properties are a project of Empowered Liveability Director, Nicole Doherty and her co-directors, Goro Gupta and Joseph Salfaro. All have lived experience with disability.

Nicole said when participants move in to their houses they have a sense of ownership. With their NDIS SDA and Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding, they can choose any provider to support them so they can come and go as they please and lead the life they want.

Shania's mum, Danielle, said it's a safer, more age-appropriate living environment for Shania where she can go out for dinner with friends, go to the movies or stay up late if she chooses. These are things in her former living environment she couldn't do before.

Danielle said now Shania can live an independent life, like other young people, she knows it will lead to further live-changing experiences.

Plan phases

The work in Phase 1 will guide the implementation of activities and timings in Phases 2 and 3.

Phase 1: Understand the gaps and design the response

November 2019 – May 2020

Aims:

- Better understand participant home and living preferences and requirements
- Understand the pain points and gaps in data, information, practice and Scheme outcomes
- Capture existing research, ideas, needs and design responses to address identified gaps
- Support the development of a strong participant voice in SDA.

Core activities	Aligns with Pillar
Work with stakeholders to apply innovation definition as it relates to SDA, and create an evaluation approach (including KPIs) to effectively assess the work delivered in Phases 2 and 3 of this plan	1, 2, 3
Explore features of a participant preference survey as part of the SDA Data Release Plan	1, 2, 3
Hold a series of participant and stakeholder roundtables to increase understanding of SDA innovation for participants including those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, participants from CALD and LGBTIQ+ communities, and those living in rural or remote locations	1, 2
Explore and identify scalable approaches which involve participants in SDA design	1
Undertake a literature review and environmental scan of available research and data to understand the national and international landscape as it relates to SDA. This will enable development of a research plan that addresses critical gaps in current knowledge	2, 3
Work with the Independent Advisory Council (IAC) to identify the best way to support the development of a strong participant voice in SDA and to guide this plan	1

Core activities	Aligns with Pillar
Collaborate with participants and advocacy groups to develop participant snapshots to better inform future SDA developments	1, 2, 3
Identify barriers to delivery of support models within SDA that reflect participant preferences, and work with stakeholders to address barriers	1, 3
Release a policy and funding model for Individual Living Options	3
Explore opportunities to work with existing online housing platforms to capture participant preferences	1, 2, 3
Engage with Commonwealth and State agencies responsible for remote Indigenous housing to identify opportunities for achieving SDA supply in conjunction with broader efforts to build housing in remote communities	1, 2, 3
Engage with the Australian Building Codes Board on potential minimum accessibility standards for housing to be applied through the National Construction Code	1
Work with the market, including state and territory government providers, to consider innovative responses to transformation of legacy SDA stock.	1, 2, 3

Outcomes:

- Stakeholders contribute to the development of the plan for next steps.
- Findings of gap analysis, literature review and stakeholder feedback published.
- Endorsement for move to Phase 3.

Phase 2: Implement the response

June – December 2020

Aims:

- Gather research and collate data to address knowledge gaps
- Create participant-centred responses to barriers in knowledge and access
- Identify scalable models to enable participants' engagement in SDA design.

Core activities	Aligns with Pillar
Commission research and/or data capture to address the gaps as identified in Phase 1	2
Create standard operating procedures to capture and release participant preference data within the NDIA	1, 2, 3
Establish a central process to catch, explore and evaluate new ideas; and identify actions to remove barriers to SDA innovation	1, 2, 3
Identify the leading edge in home design, support, technology and integrated community design from other sectors	2, 3
Commence the design of showcase activities and options to facilitate awards	2
Work with participants, peer networks and advocates to design information and engagement tools that build participant knowledge of SDA	1
Commence a communications campaign that builds participant awareness of SDA and Individual Living Options; and educates NDIA staff, partners and intermediaries on how to support housing goals	1, 3
Create an Innovation Design Challenge that gives importance to participant views and ideas on innovative SDA design.	1, 2

Outcomes:

- Stakeholder consultation and development of the Plan for next steps completed.
- First release of participant preference information.
- Research and data gathering complete and ready to inform forward program.
- Endorsement for move to Phase 3.

Phase 3: Showcase the results

January 2021 – June 2021

Aims:

- Share findings and innovative approaches that lead to good outcomes for participants
- Facilitate increased adoption of innovative SDA design and support models.

Core activities	Aligns with Pillar
Publicly release the findings of the commissioned research and the data insights	2
Promote and showcase innovative SDA and support models through information and event-based activities, including transformation of legacy stock	2
Train NDIA staff on pathways for participants with SDA needs	1
Announce policy or process changes to open up innovative models in the market (if needed)	2, 3
Evaluation of plan.	1, 2, 3

Outcomes:

- Stakeholder consultation and development of potential future work plan completed.
- Research findings disseminated and promoted.
- Identified gaps in SDA data and knowledge base starting to be addressed.

Glossary

Accessible – Accessible housing refers to the construction of housing to enable independent living for people.

Accommodation and Housing – a dwelling or building in which someone may live or stay. Houses, villas, duplexes, apartments, townhouses and flats are considered collectively.

Advocacy – Advocacy for people with disability can be defined as speaking, acting or writing with minimal conflict of interest on behalf of the interests of a disadvantaged person or group, in order to promote, protect and defend the welfare of and justice for either the person or groups.

Amenities – useful or pleasant facilities or services.

Community inclusion – the range of ways people are involved in the wider community.

Contemporary – in the context of the NDIS marketplace, contemporary approaches are demonstrated to improve participant outcomes through evidence and/or relevant information. These approaches are already implemented locally or internationally. These approaches characteristically represent:

- closeness to community norms through social and economic participation
- the capacity to deliver improved outcomes for participants
- choice and control in the design and delivery of supports
- the promotion of learning, growth and development
- cost efficiencies while delivering effective outcomes for participants
- solutions across multiple communities, locations and contexts.

Evidence-based – an approach that emphasises the practical application of the findings of the best available current research.

Funding/funded supports – supports the NDIS pays for through a participant's plan. These supports must be reasonable and necessary.

Group home – a house where a small number of unrelated people in need of support can live together. Group housing is distinguished from other forms by the larger number of residents (4 or 5), with 'large group homes' having 6 or more residents.

Individual Living Options (ILO) – living arrangements that focus on the individual. They include living alone, co-residency, host arrangements and living together options. They are an alternative to group home services. ILO design features include:

- individually-focussed supports
- staged implementation
- a primary support approach
- supplementary support
- tailored and flexible packages that are closely monitored.

Innovation – in the NDIS marketplace innovation, or innovative support models are those that demonstrate effective processes, and/or products that offer novel approaches to achieving participant goals. Innovative models should have high growth potential proportionate to national demand. Innovative support models are not necessarily evidence-based, but may have:

- been previously tried or exist in other industries
- not been implemented before
- showcase creative solutions across regional areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI).

Innovative models must aim to provide participants with the best outcome and have an evaluation process in place.

Legacy stock – disability housing that accommodate 6 or more residents in the same house.

LGBTIQA+ – an evolving acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual and other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

NDIA – National Disability Insurance Agency, is the agency which runs the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

NDIS – National Disability Insurance Scheme. A new way of providing support for Australians with disability, their families and carers.

Market – A collection of providers offering products and services, including SDA, to NDIS participants.

Mainstream services – The government systems providing services to the Australian public e.g. health, mental health, education, justice, housing, child protection and employment services.

Participant – A person who meets the NDIS access requirements.

Research – the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.

Scalable – a model or system that is able to grow or to be made larger.

Supports – Things to help a person undertake daily life activities and enable them to participate in the community and reach their goals.

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) – one of the supports that may be funded for some participants who have an extreme functional impairment or very high support needs. SDA refers to housing for people who require specialist housing solutions, assisting with the delivery of supports that cater for their extreme functional impairment or very high support needs. SDA does not refer to the support services, but the homes in which the support services are delivered.

SDA Provider – a registered NDIS provider that is registered to provide specialist disability accommodation; or a registered provider of supports that can provide specialist disability accommodation under its registration.

Acknowledgements

The NDIA would like to acknowledge the contribution of the NDIA's Participant Reference Group, Independent Advisory Council, SDA Reference Group, Department of Social Services and the NDIS Commission. Thank you for the advice and feedback received in developing an SDA Innovation Plan that will promote and address barriers to innovation in SDA.

Thanks also to the individuals and organisations who contributed to the case studies contained in this document.

The quotes from participants on various pages of this document were recorded at several NDIA consultation sessions held prior to and during the development of this plan.

We will need the continued input and guidance from a broad range of stakeholders as we commence the activities outlined in the SDA Innovation Plan and build upon our knowledge.

Register your interest to find out more about the development of activities under the SDA Innovation Plan by visiting www.ndis.gov.au





For more information about the NDIS please contact:

www.ndis.gov.au


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