

Annual Public Forum

Q & A resource

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE NDIA

Has there been any consideration given to ensuring that public transport is disability accessible in the planning of housing for people with disabilities? There is no point in living in an accessible house when you can't get out into the community with independence.

For housing seekers and SDA providers alike, location is a key consideration. Housing seekers will certainly require access to amenities, transport and their local community.

Under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) sought to give visibility to disability issues and to ensure development and implementation of all public policy that impacts on people with disability leading to inclusive and accessible communities, including the public spaces and public transport.

The NDIA new SDA Design Standard will also come into full effect in 2021.

Here are some useful resources that detail design standards and other information about developing and managing SDA housing:

Designing for inclusion and independence

www.summerfoundation.org.au/?s=designing+for+inclusion+and+independence

Establishing effective SDA projects

www.summerfoundation.org.au/?s=establishing+effective+sda+projects

New Housing Options - Design Insights

www.summerfoundation.org.au/?s=new+housing+options+-+design+insights

Separating Housing and Support Services Toolkit

www.summerfoundation.org.au/?s=separating+housing+and+support+services+toolkit

The NDIS SDA Pathway is still very cumbersome and complex for all.

If you have a disability, finding somewhere to live that suits you can be hard. The first step to finding the right place is to have a good think about what you want and need. People with disability haven't always been able to make choices about where they live and who they live with and many have been forced to live in aged care or other unsuitable settings.

The NDIS is changing this by giving people with disability more choice and control about where they live and who they live with. The Housing Hub, an initiative of the Summer Foundation, is available to contact and often facilitate online webinars for people with disabilities, families and service providers to talk about housing options. Find current events at: www.housinghub.org.au/news and other information at: www.summerfoundation.org.au/information-for-people-with-disability/ and www.summerfoundation.org.au/all-events/

You can also create a Housing Seeker profile on housinghub.org.au and work through questions to develop a report on your housing needs and preferences. You can download this report to take to a discussion with your planner and you can also ask the Housing Hub to email you when properties become available that match your preferences. Refer to: www.housinghub.org.au

The fact that people with complex needs are still in aged care accommodation in this day and age is a sad situation.

We agree with you. Young people living in aged care is a wicked problem involving multiple sectors, including hospitals, housing, disability, aged care and primary and community health. We are working hard to achieve change in policy and practice in relation to young people in aged care.

To resolve the issue of young people living in aged care, young people with disability must know about the housing and support options that are available to them, relevant sector professionals must know how to best support them and the housing options that meet their needs must be built.

If you know of a younger person living in aged care who would like some support, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us via the Summer Foundation info line on 1300 626 560 or the Housing Options advice line on 1300 61 64 63.

Is the NDIA able to outline the best pathway for a young person in a nursing home to navigate to an SDA? And could you provide an update on the system coordinators who will be working with young people in residential aged care?

The NDIA created a dedicated team of YPIRAC planners to support NDIS participants in residential aged care. They should be able to support a person in aged care to exit to SDA housing if that's their need and preference. To refer to this team, please contact the NDIA through your local office.

In September 2020, the Morrison Government also announced a national network of system coordinators to help younger people find age-appropriate accommodation and supports to allow them to live independently in the community. See: www.health.gov.au/ministers/senator-the-hon-richard-colbeck/media/new-funding-and-support-strategy-for-younger-people-living-in-aged-care
System coordinators will work with younger people and their families to support younger people to access the disability services, health services, housing and social supports they need.

When the SDA Panel has decided that a person is eligible for SDA, what assessment tools e.g. WHODAS, are used to determine which SDA Design Category absolutely matches the individual being assessed by people who have never met the individual? The SDA review panel needs direct access to those individuals they are making life decisions about. It's no good going via the CoS and the planner to the panel - so much information about the SDA applicant is lost or misunderstood using this mechanism - comments?

The NDIA's new Operational Guidelines for SDA say: If you're eligible, the answers to these questions and the evidence you provide helps us work out what SDA funding you can get. We are working to give you more tools to make it easier for you to give us your evidence. For more information, see: www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/operational-guidelines/specialist-disability-accommodation-operational-guideline/whos-eligible-sda

Is the NDIA able to outline its commitment to SDA for people with chronic mental illness and particularly for those with a cognitive impairment? What I am hearing is that most are missing out.

In addition to functional capacity, the new SDA Rules 2020 now include a person's wellbeing and interpersonal and social relationships and how this affects a person's function. A participant has 'extreme functional impairment' if the impairment results in extremely reduced functional capacity or psychosocial functioning affecting activities of mobility, self-care, and/or self-management.

There are hundreds of people each year who incur a new disability either through accident or injury. Many of these people require inpatient hospital care and rehabilitation. Those with high support needs or extreme physical impairment will qualify for SDA or major home modifications. Where should they go and live when their rehabilitation is finished and they are searching for SDA (or awaiting vacancy) or waiting for major home modifications?

When a person is waiting for their best long-term housing option to be ready, they may need interim or temporary housing. The NDIA introduced Medium Term Accommodation funding in December 2019, for bridging housing for younger NDIS participants who are at risk of being admitted to aged care, or for those who wish to leave aged care, while they wait for home modifications or identified specialist disability accommodation (SDA). It is also for participants who are ready to leave hospital but are waiting for disability-related home modifications to be completed or for a vacancy or for their new build SDA to be ready.

Further information can be found at: www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/operational-guidelines/medium-term-accommodation-operational-guideline and www.housinghub.org.au/resources/category/short-and-medium-term-accommodation

We have heard how people in community SDA changed their service providers. For those in group homes, similar is almost impossible!

The NDIS' view is that contemporary models of housing move towards the separation of housing and support. Ideally, SDA would provide the participant with choice and control over their support and there are many examples of this emerging in the SDA market.

Due to the nature of group homes, changing service providers is complicated and near impossible as the service provider owns the group home. The NDIS is moving away from the traditional group home model and looking to transform the sector to be more mainstream.

[Having] choice and control is virtually impossible for the residents of group homes. Their stakeholders have to ensure any complaints are beyond reasonable doubt and sufficient to stand-up in the Supreme Court to be considered!

There have been positive updates in the SDA Rules 2020 in July this year. There was an update which is relevant to SDA providers including exclusivity clauses in their tenancy agreements.

The SDA rule S.37 states: "A registered provider of supports must not restrict other NDIS providers from accessing an enrolled dwelling for the purposes of that NDIS provider delivering support to an eligible participant residing at the dwelling."

Why is it that the SDA review panel determines where a person can locate their SDA dwelling? Shouldn't the applicant be able to determine where they want to live? Why do successful applicants have to accept one location?

A person can include the location where they want to live as part of their preferences when providing evidence for SDA eligibility. If a person identifies an SDA housing option that they want to live in, but the location of their funding is different, it's useful to know that in the SDA Rules 2020 (www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2020L00770/Explanatory%20Statement/Text) Section 15.1 notes that the NDIA CEO may determine **more than one** SDA building type, SDA design category or location in relation to an eligible participant.

How will the new Independent Assessments impact the process of SDA?

Currently the information related to Independent Assessments is

this: www.ndis.gov.au/participants/independent-assessments/independent-assessment-process

The SDA Rules 2020 and NDIS SDA Operational Guidelines don't refer to Independent Assessments specifically.