

# SUMMER FOUNDATION NEWS



View their stories at: [🌐 downto10days.org.au/our-stories](https://downto10days.org.au/our-stories)

## Welcome to our winter update.

Over the past few months we have been working hard on a campaign that puts a spotlight on the lengthy delays NDIS participants are facing for approval of funding for housing and supports.

The 'Down to 10 days' campaign successfully brought the issue into sharp focus during the election campaign and I am pleased to report that the former government, the new government and the NDIA have all publicly acknowledged that it needs to do better. See the full update on the next page.

Now that the election is over and our new leaders have been sworn in, we are focused on supporting the new Labor government to get the NDIS back on track. We would really appreciate your help to disseminate a Survey of NDIS participants that aims to provide an evidence base for scheme re-design.

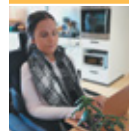
We recently appointed a new Chairman to the Summer Foundation Board, and we look forward to working with Chris Leptos AM in his new role. We farewelled and thanked Paul for his unwavering support of our work. You can read more about Chris and Paul in this newsletter.

You'll also meet Connor, who features strongly in the Down to 10 days campaign. He shares his story on page 4.

With the colder months ahead of us and the threat of COVID-19 ever-present, please stay safe and warm.

Di Winkler,  
CEO & Founder

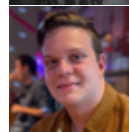
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## CAMPAIGN SHARPENS FOCUS ON HOUSING AND SUPPORT

In the past 3 months, the Summer Foundation has led an alliance of more than 130 organisations across the disability, health and housing sectors in calling for faster and more accurate decisions on housing for NDIS participants.

Off the back of our Down to 10 days campaign ([🌐 downto10days.org.au](https://downto10days.org.au)), we are very pleased to see both major parties support the need for faster decisions on housing for NDIS participants.

It was also great to see in the NDIA Quarterly Report that the Agency has committed to reducing the time frames in which these decisions on Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) are made.

The week before the election, at the request of then NDIS Minister Linda Reynolds, the CEO of the NDIA, Martin Hoffman, the Chair of the NDIA, Denis Naphine, and other NDIS Executives met at the Summer Foundation office to discuss potential solutions to faster and consistent SDA decisions.

*"At the Summer Foundation we are very keen to not simply raise problems, but to provide and shape solutions,"* said CEO Di Winkler.

*"With input from the Down to 10 days alliance partners, we developed a paper that outlined a range of strategies the NDIA could implement to make faster, better decisions on housing for NDIS participants."*

*"The meeting was constructive and solutions-focused, with a number of key points agreed on to continue the collaboration."*

We are confident that the on-going work of the campaign will help ensure real change for the better.



## NDIS PARTICIPANT SURVEY

The Summer Foundation and People with Disability Australia (PWDA) are conducting research into the NDIS experiences of people with disability, their families and close supporters. The survey results will be presented to Minister Shorten, the NDIA and the government to address the current challenges.

Share your experiences of the NDIS, and your perspectives on what is working and what needs improvement. Complete the NDIS Participant survey here: [🌐 latrobe.questionpro.com/ndisparticipantsurvey2022](https://latrobe.questionpro.com/ndisparticipantsurvey2022)



## MEDIA WATCH

The Down to 10 days campaign ([🌐 downto10days.org.au](https://downto10days.org.au)) used a range of media and social media platforms to create awareness of the campaign and highlight stories of lived experience and the impact of delayed NDIA decisions.

Articles and news stories appeared in the Age, the Canberra Times, the Guardian, ProBono, the Conversation and specialist publications as well as stories on ABC news programs. **View here:** [🌐 downto10days.org.au/media](https://downto10days.org.au/media)

Our own Dr George Taleporos continued his Reasonable and Necessary podcasts with a special election series interviewing politicians as well as a panel of disability advocates about the future of the NDIS. The series was also featured in a segment on ABC TV's The Drum. A television commercial about the campaign also aired on Sky News in the lead-up to the election. **View the TVC here:** [🌐 downto10days.org.au/tvc-video](https://downto10days.org.au/tvc-video)



## HOUSING DELAYED AND DENIED

A new report shines a light on the increasing number of hurdles being put in front of NDIS participants in order for them to receive housing support.

The report, *Housing Delayed and Denied*, NDIA Decision-Making on SDA Funding, is the result of a collaborative project by the Housing Hub and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. [summerfoundation.org.au/housing-delayed](https://summerfoundation.org.au/housing-delayed)

The report shows NDIS participants are routinely denied access to supports that meet their needs and preferences, and are also being caught up in a bureaucratic go-slow.

Whether by design to keep costs down, or simply because it has been unable to establish efficient processes, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is putting up barriers to prevent people from accessing the very supports it was established to facilitate.

*"Over the past 18 months, we have seen a shift in the way the NDIA is making decisions about SDA funding eligibility,"* said General Manager of the Housing Hub, Alecia Rathbone.

*"Our data shows that people are currently waiting an average of 82 days for an initial SDA decision from the NDIA, and when it is finally made it often doesn't align with what the person's health reports have shown they need."*

The report shows that of the people supported by the Housing Hub to get funding for SDA, only 1 in 4 received the funding they requested in the initial decision. For those who then requested an internal review by the NDIA, again only 1 in 4 received the funding they requested.

However, most who received an outcome at the external review stage received what they originally asked for.

*"People shouldn't have to get a high-price lawyer and sometimes fight for years just to get the housing they need and are entitled to,"* Ms Rathbone said.



## NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

The Summer Foundation has appointed a new chairman of its Board.

Chris Leptos AO brings a wealth of corporate and government experience to the role. His experience in the housing sector combined with his work advising state and federal governments provide him with perfect qualifications to be Chairman of our Board.

He is an experienced company director and is Chairman of the National Heart Foundation, a Non-Executive Director of IDP Education Limited, and Senior Adviser to Flagstaff Partners.

Chris has a strong interest in social impact and systems change, and shares our fundamental belief that young people in aged care is a solvable issue.

In 2000 Chris was honoured as a Member of the Order of Australia for services to business and the community, and in 2022 was honoured as an Officer of the Order of Australia for services to the not for profit sector.

We welcome Chris and convey our sincere thanks to outgoing Chairman Paul Conroy who has supported the work of the organisation for more than a decade.

In his time as Chairman Paul guided the Board through an extensive renewal program and significantly increased the lived experience of disability among Directors. Paul concludes his responsibilities with the Board at the end of June.

## UPSKILL: COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT APPROACH

The Collaborative Support Approach Tool outlines the cooperation between support coordinators, aged care staff, allied health professionals and other stakeholders working together to assist a younger person to leave aged care.

This tool details the tasks and responsibilities – the "who does what" when assisting a younger person to leave aged care and live in the community.

**The free resource, useful for aged care, NDIS providers and other stakeholders, is available here:**

[summerfoundation.org.au/collaborative-support](https://summerfoundation.org.au/collaborative-support)



## PROFILE – CONNOR

### What would you like to share with readers about yourself?

My name is Connor, I am 19 years old and moving into an SDA apartment soon. My disability is Friederichs Ataxia. I have dog named Gus who is 8 months and hoping to move in with me if he behaves.

I have a group support behind me, of family and friends. I hope that I can study OT in the future and solve accessibility issues. I would like to eventually travel to places in Europe or America.

I am hoping we can make the NDIS a lot more accessible and client based.

My biggest struggle with the NDIS and the process was that they didn't listen to me as a person and I hope that the Down to 10 days campaign can fix these issues. The more that people tell their stories about SDA the easier the process will be.

### Can you tell us about your housing journey?

I had to wait 2 years, roughly 730 days, to get the correct SDA in my plan. I was originally funded to live in a share house, which is not very accommodating for a young person, especially in Canberra.

We were all very nervous about the future, where was I going to go. At the same time my Mum had to sell her house, which made everything even more uncertain.

The process forced me to face my disability all over again, it's a progressive disability so this is very difficult.

It really impacted on my mental health, the uncertainty around how it was going to affect me and my family, and my future.

I'm looking forward to my independence, being able to go out and have people around when I want them around, and in my own home. I'm still trying to organise how I want my apartment to look, I've got a couch and looking to get a double bed for my room.

I'm looking forward to having lights that I can turn off, and blinds as well.

### Do you have any advice for others trying to get SDA?

I think continue as best as you can – you've just got to hang in there. It was good having good support around me.

## RESEARCH UPDATE

As part of the Summer Foundation-La Trobe University Research Programme, in recent months we have published several journal articles and reports, and presented at academic conferences.

We've been looking at issues such as hospital discharge, accessible housing regulations, NDIA decision-making, support coordination, and the impact of living in SDA.

Our projects aim to:

- Understand the needs of people with disability, and what has been tried in the past
- Inform potential solutions to systemic issues
- Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of new programs, policy changes, or clinical practice

We know that to make a difference, the evidence needs to be accessible to everyone. We strive to communicate our findings to those who need it most, including people with disability and their families, support workers, health professionals, and policy-makers.

You can see all our research here:

 [summerfoundation.org.au/research-library](https://summerfoundation.org.au/research-library)