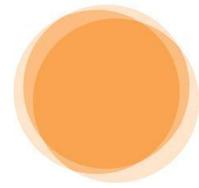


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NDIS impacts on South Australian participants with complex needs

Summer Foundation and Housing Hub submission
to the Social Development Committee

August 2022

The Summer Foundation and Housing Hub acknowledge and thank all staff and storytellers for their contributions to this submission.

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Executive Summary

The Summer Foundation and the Housing Hub welcome the opportunity to make a joint submission to the Social Development Committee on National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) impacts on South Australian participants with complex needs. Many South Australians depend on the NDIS to live an ordinary life. It is crucial that the NDIS strengthens the rights and choices of South Australian participants and builds their capacity to live independently and well in the community.

The provision of NDIS supports and services must directly align with the needs and goals of participants. The ability to exercise choice and control in daily living is synonymous with an ordinary life. In order to reach their full potential, participants must be in charge of their lives, with support, if required. The South Australian Government must work with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and all levels of government to support South Australian participants. Systems change is required to ensure participants have access to the supports they need, when they need them.

It is essential that people with disability are at the centre of all policies and solutions. Greater outcomes for participants are best defined by participants. To that end, we have sought the contributions of South Australian participants, and their supporters, to ensure co-design engagement in the development of recommendations for an improved NDIS.

The Summer Foundation and the Housing Hub are confident that the recommendations in this submission will enable the NDIA and South Australian Government to continue to uphold its obligations under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Cth) into the future, so that South Australian participants can live their lives with dignity and confidence.

Recommendation 1: The South Australian Government must work with the NDIA to develop and improve guidelines on information and evidence participants provide to support their Home and Living requests. These must be publicly available and in a variety of accessible formats, to ensure clarity and understanding for everyone.

Recommendation 2: The South Australian Government must support, and provide access to, capacity building opportunities for participants, so they are able to better navigate the NDIS system and access the funding they need to live well in the community.

Recommendation 3: The South Australian Government must collaborate with the NDIA to develop practical strategies to achieve outcomes for participants by streamlining decision-making processes and making timely and accurate decisions regarding housing and supports. Particularly where the NDIS provides funding for supports, and housing is accessed through the South Australian public, community or private market.

Recommendation 4: The South Australian Government must work with the NDIA to ensure the NDIS legislation is applied in a fair and consistent manner.

Recommendation 5: The South Australian Government must support South Australian participants to access skilled allied health professionals specialising in home and living funding, and support networks, to assist in the submission of comprehensive Home and Living applications.

Recommendation 6: The South Australian Government must enable and encourage the support coordination workforce to build its capacity to better support participants who have complex needs. The South Australian Government can work alongside the NDIA and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to:

- Mandate quality provision of support coordination through significant and regular capacity building
- Facilitate best practice learning through Communities of Practice and peer-to-peer learning opportunities at the local level
- Update the NDIS Price Guide to allow support coordinators to claim for education and training
- Continuous improvements of guidance, tools and training
- Ensure that participants with complex needs have at least 40 hours of level 3 support coordination funding included in their NDIS plans to explore and then request the home and living supports they require

Recommendation 7: The South Australian Government must work with the NDIA to ensure adequate stewardship of the Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) market in South Australia, ensuring the right SDA is built, based on participant demand, and that the committed funding for SDA is utilised to support participants requiring SDA in South Australia.

Recommendation 8: To improve market engagement and signalling, the NDIA must develop and publish an annual national plan for SDA that sets out priority locations and proposed responses to thin or underdeveloped markets.

Recommendation 9: The South Australian Government must work with the NDIA to ensure a better experience for existing and emerging SDA providers across South Australia.

Recommendation 10: The South Australian Government must collaborate with the NDIA and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to ensure a complete separation of housing and support.

Recommendation 11: The South Australian Government should promote the evaluation of outcomes to South Australian participants. This will assist in providing evidence on the outcomes of good home and living supports and enable innovative models to be developed.

Recommendation 12: The South Australian Government must provide resources and opportunities for participants, and their close others, to build their capacity to explore the housing options that will adequately meet their needs. This must be across all aspects of housing (public, community, private, SDA) and support options.

Recommendation 13: The South Australian Government must work with Aboriginal participants and the NDIA to co-design models of SDA that are culturally responsive.

Recommendation 14: The South Australian Government must work with, and influence, the Federal Government to deliver on the reform required to better support people with disability in external systems.

Background

The Summer Foundation has been working with people with disability since 2006, to ensure no younger person (under 65) is forced to live in residential aged care (RAC). Our focus is to shape, demonstrate and deliver systemic change of social policy and practice across the disability/National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), health and housing sectors.

The Housing Hub was established as a Social Enterprise by the Summer Foundation in 2018 with the aim of creating a means for people with disability to learn about housing options and find a home to meet their needs. The Housing Hub provides a range of services for housing seekers, providers and those who support them to navigate the emerging accessible housing market.

Access to appropriate housing and support is fundamental to health and wellbeing, and integral to the ability of people with disability to participate in their communities. Under the NDIS, an estimated 6% of participants will be eligible for Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA). In South Australia, it is anticipated that 2,719 participants will be eligible for SDA but only 2,021 participants currently have SDA in their plan.¹ Additionally, the combined supply of SDA dwellings in South Australia is 1,454 (1,255 enrolled and 199 in the development pipeline), which is not enough to meet current and future demand.

The other 94% of participants, as well as people with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS, will access public, community or private housing. For many people with disability, accessing appropriate housing is extremely challenging due to the lack of accessible and affordable housing options. Participants who access public or community housing will still require funding for supports for daily activities, community participation and capacity building through the NDIS.

¹ National Disability Insurance Agency (2022) 'NDIS Quarterly Report to disability ministers: 30 June 2022' p825. Link [here](#).

Terms of reference

The ability to access and navigate NDIS requirements

The NDIS assists participants to live independently by funding home and living supports that give them more choice and control over where, how and with whom they live. A major feature of the NDIS is SDA, which provides long-term, accessible housing for participants with extreme functional impairment and/or very high support needs. Participants requesting SDA and/or related supports are required to complete the [Home and Living supporting evidence form](#), which asks participants questions about their needs. The NDIA Home and Living Panel assesses these requests, and determines the housing and related supports that will be funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Many participants who require funding for Home and Living supports have no way of understanding how the NDIA will come to their determination.² Participants and their supporters, including support coordinators and allied health professionals (AHPs), often lack access to quality information on these supports, eligibility and the processes. The Home and Living Panel's operational guidelines are not published and there is little information about its role and operations available on the NDIS website. Considerable knowledge and experience is required to successfully prepare evidence for Home and Living Support requests (including for SDA) but this is often lacking among supporters. As a result, there is significant variation in the amount, quality and relevance of the information provided to the NDIA as part of a Home and Living request.³

People with disability should be better informed about their rights, the different opportunities available to them and the services available to support them.^{4,5} There is a need for quality information about various home and living options, and how to access these, for people with complex needs. People with complex needs must have increased knowledge and understanding of their options for where, how and with whom they live.

“Surprisingly, the NDIS has provided little or no information directly regarding how to get appropriate housing. In the plan it just says it has SDA and a quote is required. I would have expected a bit more direction about the next steps.

It's hard to find useful information. Especially when you have specific questions. I am hopeful my support coordinator will be able to help me find the information I need.”

Darryl - South Australian participant

² Summer Foundation (2022) 'Supported Independent Living costs and impacts Policy Position Statement'. Link [here](#).

³ Public Interest Advocacy Centre and Housing Hub (2022) 'Housing Delayed and Denied: NDIA Decision-Making on Specialist Disability Accommodation Funding'. Link [here](#).

⁴ Summer Foundation (2021) 'Consultation on Support for Decision Making'. Link [here](#).

⁵ Summer Foundation (2021) 'Consultation on Home and Living'. Link [here](#).

Clearer guidance from the NDIA would assist participants to provide concise and relevant evidence as part of their application. This will not only improve experiences and outcomes for participants but also streamline NDIS decision-making processes. There are practical strategies that the NDIA could employ to improve the quality and consistency of the evidence submitted by participants, including:

- The provision of written guidelines regarding the specific evidence needed for a timely Home and Living decision, targeted towards different stakeholders including participants, support coordinators and AHPs
- The development of template reports, which clearly outline the legislated eligibility criteria and word limits to assist AHPs to provide more concise and rigorous reports for the Home and Living Panel
- Specialised NDIS/Home and Living training for AHPs completing reports

Recommendation 1: The South Australian Government must work with the NDIA to develop and improve guidelines on information and evidence participants provide to support their Home and Living requests. These must be publicly available and in a variety of accessible formats, to ensure clarity and understanding for everyone.

Recommendation 2: The South Australian Government must support, and provide access to, capacity building opportunities for participants, so they are able to better navigate the NDIS system and access the funding they need to live well in the community.

Timeliness of approval for appropriate specialist disability supports

The Housing Hub has tracked data for more than 690 participants who have been supported over the past 4 years. These participants received expert support from the Housing Hub team, who have experience in seeking SDA funding. Participants who work with a highly skilled team, such as the Housing Hub, are likely to receive higher quality support compared to others seeking SDA funding.

The entire process from submitting an initial Home and Living request to receiving funding often takes many months. In March 2022, data was analysed to identify how long the NDIA is taking to make SDA determinations for people being supported by the Housing Hub. This analysis showed that initial funding decisions were taking a median of 97 days for this cohort (compared to the NDIA's current KPI of 50 days⁶). Only 21.5% of requests for SDA resulted in funding for SDA to meet the participant's needs and preferences.⁷

“Waiting is not something that’s good for a person with disability and I don’t think people realise that the waiting time that people with disability have to put up with not only affects the person with disability but also other people in their lives.

I’ve signed a conditional offer for an apartment in the city and I’ve had that for 3 or 4 months now, waiting to see whether I get the SDA funding.”

Trevor - South Australian participant

⁶ National Disability Insurance Agency (2022) ‘Participant Service Guarantee’. Link [here](#).

⁷ Public Interest Advocacy Centre and Housing Hub (2022) ‘Housing Delayed and Denied: NDIA Decision-Making on Specialist Disability Accommodation Funding’. Link [here](#).

For participants who received initial decisions that did not align with their needs, and therefore requested both an internal and external review, the entire process took, on average, more than 400 days.⁸ For external reviews, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) process seeks independent consideration of an SDA funding decision in line with the [NDIS legislation](#). The Housing Hub team is currently supporting more than 120 participants to undertake an internal review or appeal of their SDA funding decision because it does not align to their needs and preferences and evidence submitted.

The need for protracted decision-making is seen to be a result of flawed and opaque processes, poor administration by the NDIA and the failure to adequately consider participants' individual needs and circumstances as required by the NDIS legislation. AAT legal fees have cost the Federal Government more than \$30 million in the last financial year, with more than \$17 million being paid to private law firms to represent the NDIA at AAT hearings.⁹

Many participants end up withdrawing their cases after filing an internal review or appeal application with the AAT due to feelings of exhaustion and disillusionment with the drawn-out and intimidating nature of the process.¹⁰ Many other participants give up and do not request a review due to the complexities, delays, frustrations and stress associated with requesting an internal review.

While Home and Living decisions can be complex, the delays currently experienced by participants seeking SDA and housing related supports are unacceptable. Participants often experience a significant decline in their health and wellbeing while they wait for supports to be funded. The lengthy and unpredictable timeframes contribute significantly to hospital discharge delays¹¹ and admissions to RAC.¹²

“The frustration and uncertainty [of waiting for the NDIA to make a decision about SDA] has definitely weighed on my mental wellbeing. It has been difficult to make any long-term plans without knowing whether I would be approved for SDA.

My current home is no longer suitable for my needs but without clarity about the SDA decision I have not been able to make any concrete plans about my long-term housing situation.”

Darryl - South Australian participant

⁸ Public Interest Advocacy Centre and Housing Hub (2022) 'Housing Delayed and Denied: NDIA Decision-Making on Specialist Disability Accommodation Funding'. Link [here](#).

⁹ Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee (2022) 'Senate Estimates - Thursday 17 February 2022'. Link [here](#).

¹⁰ Public Interest Advocacy Centre and Housing Hub (2022) 'Housing Delayed and Denied: NDIA Decision-Making on Specialist Disability Accommodation Funding'. Link [here](#).

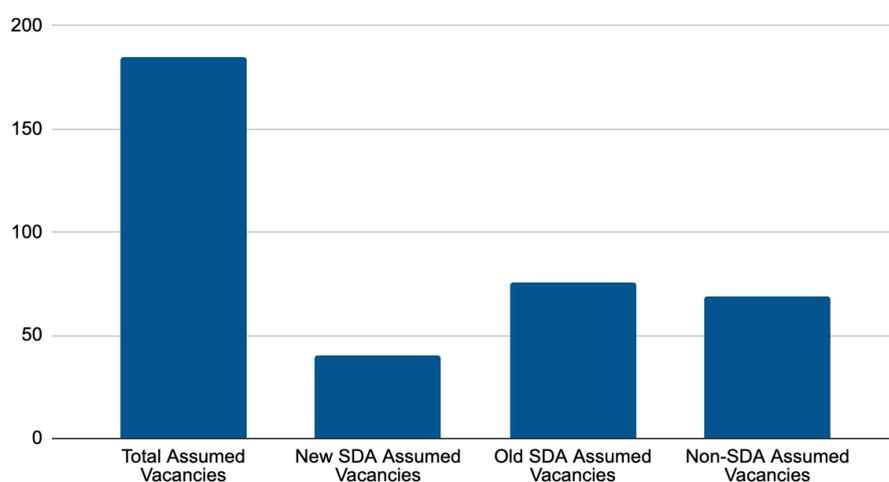
¹¹ La Trobe University and Summer Foundation (2022) 'Evaluating the discharge planning process: Barriers, challenges, and facilitators of timely and effective discharge for people with disability and complex needs'. Link [here](#); and Summer Foundation (2021) 'Hospital discharge of NDIS Participants with high and complex needs'. Link [here](#).

¹² Summer Foundation (2022) 'Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the NDIS'. Link [here](#).

A lack of disability housing is not the main barrier to hospital discharge, exit from RAC or other unsuitable housing. The Housing Hub provides direct access to available, accessible housing across Australia. There are currently over 3,000 vacant places in disability housing nationally, more than 800 of which are in new build SDA.¹³ A number of vacancies are in non-SDA housing provided through public and community housing systems, disability organisations or private rentals.

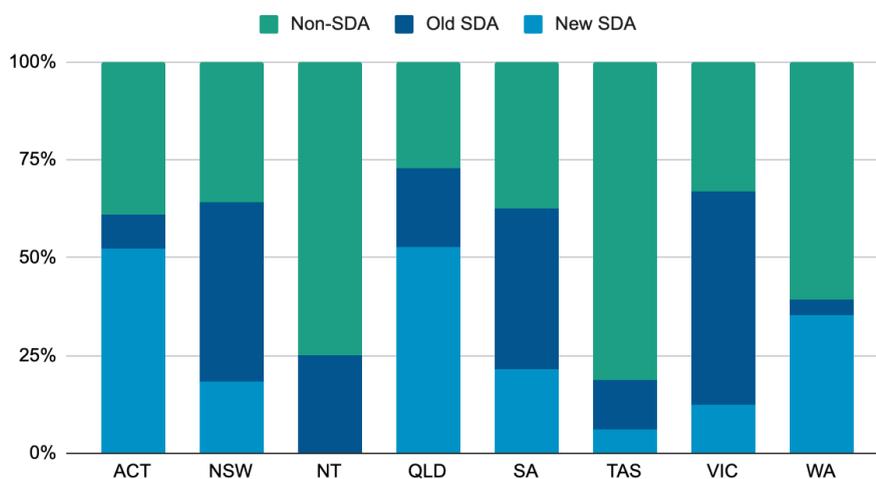
Figure 1 below shows a breakdown of vacant places available in South Australia. This shows the number of listings published on the Housing Hub on 13 July 2022 and places have been calculated by applying some assumptions on a conservative basis.

Figure 1. Housing Hub SA Vacancies, July 2022



When compared to the data for other states, as shown in Figure 2, South Australia has a more even spread of vacancies across all types of listings (non-SDA, new SDA and older SDA) than other states display. As more new SDA properties come out of development and are enrolled, the share of new SDA shown in this figure would be expected to increase.

Figure 2. Housing Hub Vacancies, July 2022



¹³ Housing Hub, www.housinghub.org.au

The *Down to 10 Days Alliance*, which brings together people with disability and more than 130 organisations in the disability, health and housing sectors, calls on the NDIA and Federal Government to make faster, accurate decisions. The *Down to 10 Days Alliance* has developed a range of practical changes to current processes that will assist the NDIA to improve the time it takes to make decisions on housing and supports. These include:

- Improving the quality, rigor and consistency of the evidence provided to the Home and Living Panel to eliminate the need to synthesise long allied health and medical reports
- A triage process to assess the information provided to the NDIA and determine if there is all the information required to make a decision regarding SDA and support
- Developing and implementing Home and Living Panel decision templates to make it easier for the panel to consistently document and communicate decisions and reasons for decisions

Recommendation 3: The South Australian Government must collaborate with the NDIA to develop practical strategies to achieve outcomes for participants by streamlining decision-making processes and making timely and accurate decisions regarding housing and supports. Particularly where the NDIS provides funding for supports, and housing is accessed through the South Australian public, community or private market.

Adequacy of funding in NDIS plans

NDIA decision-making criteria

There is an increasing number of Home and Living decisions that do not align with participants' needs and preferences or the NDIS legislation.¹⁴ Many people with high support needs are being forced to live in shared dwellings with other people with disability, because the SDA funding which they have been allocated does not allow them to live alone or with their family. This is despite Housing Hub data that suggests that more than half of housing-seekers have goals to live alone, while less than half wish to live with other people with disability.¹⁵

The NDIA appears to believe that a 2 or 3 person shared SDA house is better value for money than a single occupant SDA. This is not always the case, particularly if a participant has a strong preference to live alone and is able to gain independence, capacity and confidence in doing so.¹⁶ These determinations often ignore the longer-term benefits of providing funding for a participant to live in a home that suits their needs and preferences.¹⁷

¹⁴ For participants supported by the Housing Hub's Tenancy Matching Service who had received an outcome as of March 2022, 74% did not receive the funding they requested from the NDIA. See: Public Interest Advocacy Centre and Housing Hub (2022) 'Housing Delayed and Denied: NDIA Decision-Making on Specialist Disability Accommodation Funding'. Link [here](#).

¹⁵ Housing Hub (2022) 'Housing Seeker Snapshot: June 2022'. Link [here](#).

¹⁶ *Boicovitis and National Disability Insurance Agency [2022] AATA 204* (9 February 2022). Link [here](#).

¹⁷ Summer Foundation (2022) 'Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the NDIS'. Link [here](#).

Well built housing, with the right supports will enable a participant to build their capacity and over time, reduce the need for funded supports. Providing the right level of funding upfront will ensure that funding is not wasted on supports that do not address the needs and goals of participants.¹⁸ This is also critical to prevent disruptions to how a person is able to live day-to-day.

The Home and Living Panel must give greater weight to the many ways in which appropriate housing can improve the lives and outcomes of participants, and consider all evidence submitted to determine the type of SDA funding provided. This would reflect the principles that underpin the NDIS, to enable participants to build their capacity to achieve their goals.¹⁹ Participants, their families and close others are best placed to advise on what are reasonable and necessary supports for them to live an ordinary life. The NDIA needs to understand participants' needs and goals and ensure funding decisions actively enable choice and control.

A trend has emerged where NDIS planners advise participants who need to live alone but have been funded to share housing with other people with disability, to negotiate with SDA providers to ask them to take a lower level of funding than is in the [SDA Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits](#). This puts participants, family members and providers in challenging positions. Additionally, the supports that the participant has been funded for will not be enough to enable them to live alone, which forces the participant to seek greater informal supports or put themselves at risk by accepting fewer or sub-par supports. This is completely unreasonable given that SDA providers and investors have developed SDA properties on the basis of information that the NDIA has published to encourage such development.

Recommendation 4: The South Australian Government must work with the NDIA to ensure the NDIS legislation is applied in a fair and consistent manner.

NDIA decision-making processes

Often, and as a result of the lack of clarity of NDIA processes for applying for Home and Living supports, a participant will receive a determination for SDA with no supports. In these instances, the participant has to provide a secondary application to access funding for the supports they need to live in SDA. This may require the provision of additional evidence, delaying the participants ability to move for several months, or more.²⁰ Despite a recent approach by the NDIA to bring together SDA and support decisions into the Home and Living Panel, this is not always the experience on the ground. The opaque NDIA process does not encourage or inform participants to cover all needs in the application.

SDA and Supported Independent Living (SIL) were designed to work together to enable participants to live independently in appropriate housing. It is important that requests for SIL/supports and SDA funding are coordinated and assessed together.²¹ This will not only reduce unnecessary delays but also ensure participants have access to all the supports they need, when they need them.

¹⁸ Summer Foundation (2022) 'Current Scheme Implementation and Forecasting for the NDIS'. Link [here](#).

¹⁹ National Disability Insurance Agency (2021) 'What principles do we follow to create your plan?' Link [here](#).

²⁰ Summer Foundation (2021) 'Hospital discharge of NDIS Participants with high and complex needs'. Link [here](#).

²¹ Summer Foundation (2022) 'Supported Independent Living costs and impacts Policy Position Statement'. Link [here](#).

Where participants are deemed to be ineligible for SDA funding, their application for supports is often ceased or lost. In these instances, participants are left to explore public, community and private housing, but find they are unable to move in due to a lack of NDIS supports. Alternatively, participants with inadequate or no SDA funding are often pushed into SIL homes, resulting in restricted choice and control over their lives.²²

Some participants who do move into a new SDA property, after enduring months or years of changing processes, denials and appeals, are now reporting that their support funding is being reduced in plan reviews. As a result some participants are fearful that they will be forced to move out of their new home where they finally have their needs met, if they lose access to adequate support.²³

Recommendation 5: The South Australian Government must support South Australian participants to access skilled allied health professionals specialising in home and living funding, and support networks, to assist in the submission of comprehensive Home and Living applications.

Funding for support coordination

Participants who are exploring housing options require specialist support coordination that focuses on housing needs, delivered by support coordinators with experience in successful home and living funding requests. Many support coordinators are unskilled and inexperienced in home and living supports so are unable to adequately support participants. This results in additional delays and wasted plan funds for participants.

The NDIS provides for Specialist Support Coordination (Level 3); however, getting the required hours funded to explore housing can be difficult for a participant. Even when the right funding is provided, finding and accessing a specialist support coordinator who is skilled in housing is challenging. In particular, younger people currently in or at risk of entering RAC are not receiving funding for support coordination at a level that meets their needs. Through the work of the Tenancy Matching Service, the Housing Hub has witnessed hundreds of SDA eligible participants going without effective support for accessing housing due to a lack of specialist housing support coordinators.²⁴

These challenges are heightened by difficulties accessing general support coordinators who have the necessary skills and experience to help participants with complex needs to access high quality and effective support coordination. Support coordination is a role that requires no formal qualification or training, and support coordinators often lack the specialised knowledge needed to address appropriate support and capacity building for participants.²⁵

²² Summer Foundation (2022) 'A more inclusive and just society for people with disability'. Link [here](#).

²³ Summer Foundation (2022) 'Support in Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Apartments'. Link [here](#).

²⁴ Housing Hub (2022) 'Housing Seeker Snapshot: June 2022'. Link [here](#).

²⁵ Summer Foundation (2021) 'How to Reform Support Coordination to Meet the Needs of NDIS Participants with High and Complex Needs'. Link [here](#).

Problematically, the [NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits](#) (NDIS Price Guide) prohibits support coordinators from making specific claims for training and upskilling.²⁶ As a result, support coordinators have limited capacity for professional development as this must be undertaken in their own time and at their own cost. The lack of training often means support coordinators pursue the ‘easy’ or ‘known’ support options rather than the most suitable, leading to poorer outcomes for participants.²⁷

Support coordinators must have access to professional development opportunities and information resources to support them to deliver high quality support coordination. Adequate training ensures that support coordination extends beyond common functions such as connecting with mainstream services, and addresses more comprehensive supports such as health, housing, capacity building, goal setting and independence.²⁸ The Summer Foundation’s UpSkill program offers specialised [training sessions](#), [resources](#) and a [Community of Practice](#) for support coordinators and AHPs to access information, develop best practice approaches and build their capacity to support people with high and complex needs so participants can achieve good outcomes and live well in the community.

“There was a lot of work involved in gathering the reports and evidence [to support my application]. I needed to provide information, feedback and clarification to the [occupational therapist]. Some of the information required is very invasive.

[My] support coordinator helped with organising the application including the therapists required to do assessments and provide supporting reports. They also helped me to navigate the system and provided emotional support through the frustratingly long process.”

Darryl - South Australian participant

Recommendation 6: The South Australian Government must enable and encourage the support coordination workforce to build its capacity to better support participants who have complex needs. The South Australian Government can work alongside the NDIA and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to:

- **Mandate quality provision of support coordination through significant and regular capacity building**
- **Facilitate best practice learning through Communities of Practice and peer-to-peer learning opportunities at the local level**
- **Update the NDIS Price Guide to allow support coordinators to claim for education and training**
- **Continuous improvements of guidance, tools and training**
- **Ensure that participants with complex needs have at least 40 hours of level 3 support coordination funding included in their NDIS plans to explore and then request the home and living supports they require**

²⁶ National Disability Insurance Agency (2022) ‘NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits 2022-23’. Link [here](#). p18.

²⁷ Summer Foundation (2021) ‘How to Reform Support Coordination to Meet the Needs of NDIS Participants with High and Complex Needs’. Link [here](#).

²⁸ Summer Foundation (2021) ‘How to Reform Support Coordination to Meet the Needs of NDIS Participants with High and Complex Needs’. Link [here](#).

Ability of the NDIS workforce and market to deliver necessary accommodation and funded supports

Prior to the NDIS, disability housing was either owned by state governments or funded by grants from government and philanthropy. Housing was often built on an institutional model and did not provide for the individual needs of people with disability.

"I have been living in a state government housing unit for over 30 years. Although it was fitted out for my needs back then, it is inadequate to meet my current or my future needs.

As I age my physical needs have increased, and they will inevitably increase further. The current home is not structurally capable of being modified to accommodating [assistive technology] such as ceiling hoists for transfers. It is also not adequately insulated (particularly in the walls) to maintain consistent temperature, which is particularly important due to my disability."

Darryl - South Australian participant

Accessible housing

In the past 2 years, there has been a significant shift to ensure accessibility standards are made commonplace. Recent changes to the [National Construction Code](#) (NCC) adopt the Silver Level of accessibility set by Livable Housing Australia's [Livable Housing Design Guidelines](#) (LHDG). Additionally, state and territory governments are working to ensure public and community housing are provided at greater accessibility levels, ensuring housing meets the needs of the growing community and people with disability who are not eligible to receive SDA funding.

"Disability housing for residents that don't attract SDA is a forgotten group."

Community housing provider

State and territory governments must support and assist the sector to embrace changes to design and building standards, to overcome challenges and to evolve to meet the new requirements. The links between cost, time and complexity in the development of accessible housing and the potential role of good design in mitigating the impact of these variables is critical to the successful adoption of accessible housing.

Specialist Disability Accommodation

The SDA market has the potential to leverage \$5-12 billion of private capital to address the unmet demand for housing and the refurbishment or redevelopment of old stock.²⁹ Yet there are challenges emerging which will prevent the SDA market from developing into a sustainable and thriving market.

The NDIA holds responsibility for the stewardship of the SDA market. SDA investors and market players have signalled to the NDIA the changes that are needed to ensure opportunity for growth and innovation in the SDA market. Community housing providers have reported that finding tenants with the right level of SDA in their plans was 'moderately' or 'extremely' challenging, as was tenants receiving SDA determinations that do not align with their housing preference and evidence provided.³⁰ A number of other related factors are distorting the pipeline of SDA demand, including a lack of participant demand activation and opaque decision-making processes. This calls upon the NDIA to better monitor and manage risks in the market by facilitating the flow of information to key players in the SDA sector.³¹

According to the NDIA, \$271 million of the budgeted \$700 million is currently allocated in participants' plans.³² However, the NDIA anticipates that approximately 30,000 participants will be eligible for SDA funding.³³ Currently only 19,358 participants have SDA in their plans³⁴ and 11,405 participants are receiving SDA payments.³⁵ This suggests that the market stewardship function to activate demand for SDA is lagging considerably, 6 years into the SDA policy implementation.

More than 12,000 people across Australia are likely to be eligible for SDA funding and are yet to be identified. These participants need to be identified, provided with capacity building to understand their options and then have their needs and preferences recorded to then be supported to request SDA and support funding. The supply side of the market can then respond with required supply of housing to meet demand.

Recommendation 7: The South Australian Government must work with the NDIA to ensure adequate stewardship of the SDA market in South Australia, ensuring the right SDA is built, based on participant demand, and that the committed funding for SDA is utilised to support participants requiring SDA in South Australia.

²⁹ Fund managers noted that \$5 billion is a conservative estimate and the real size of the market could be more than double this size. See: PricewaterhouseCoopers and Summer Foundation (2017) 'NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation: Pathway to a Mature Market'. Link [here](#).

³⁰ Summer Foundation and Housing Hub (2022) 'Community Housing Providers and Disability Housing: An Exploration of SDA'. Link [here](#).

³¹ Summer Foundation (2021) 'Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Investor Think Tank: Findings and Recommendations'. Link [here](#).

³² National Disability Insurance Agency (2022) 'NDIS Quarterly Report to disability ministers: 30 June 2022'. Link [here](#).

³³ Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee (2021) 'Answer to Question on Notice, Social Services Portfolio, Additional Estimates. Question No: NDIA SQ21-000118'. Link [here](#).

³⁴ National Disability Insurance Agency (2022) 'NDIS Quarterly Report to disability ministers: 30 June 2022'. Link [here](#).

³⁵ National Disability Insurance Agency (2022) 'Average support line item payments data downloads'. Link [here](#).

SDA supply

As of June 2022, a total of 407 SDA providers had been registered and active since the NDIA's inception. Of these 319 providers had been active in the fourth quarter of 2021/22.³⁶ There were more than 18,600 SDA places enrolled with the NDIA, including SDA housing owned and delivered by state and territory governments.³⁷

The pipeline of new SDA supply, as at November 2021, indicates that 2,366 places in SDA are under development, across 1,661 dwellings. Three-quarters of all places are being developed in Queensland (28.8%), New South Wales (24.7%), and Victoria (23.6%). Two-thirds (66.7%) of places are in the High Physical Support design category, followed by Robust (14.5%), Fully Accessible (11.5%) and Improved Liveability (7.1%).³⁸

More than half of new places are being developed by private housing providers, followed by not-for-profit disability service providers (21%) and community housing providers (11%).³⁹ Investors and SDA providers have identified vacancy risks, pricing uncertainty and government regulations as the biggest barriers in the development of SDA.⁴⁰ This has resulted in a wavering pipeline of SDA that is unable to meet demand.

SDA in thin markets

To ensure SDA-eligible participants are able to secure the right housing as soon as their SDA funding is granted, there needs to be an adequate supply of the right kinds of SDA in participants' desired location. Supply of SDA is growing across all states and territories; however, a number of thin markets do exist.⁴¹

For SDA providers to make informed decisions about the SDA they wish to build, they need to understand the local demand, specific requirements and existing or pipeline supply. The NDIA's [quarterly reports to disability ministers](#) provide information about SDA activity in the preceding months. But the current lack of an SDA market outlook results in investors and providers having limited reliable information and market signals in order to make decisions.⁴²

Robust

There is an undersupply of Robust SDA across the country. Robust SDA is 'housing that has been designed to incorporate a reasonable level of physical access provision and be very resilient, reducing the likelihood of reactive maintenance and reducing the risk to the resident, service providers and the community.'⁴³ Well-designed Robust SDA plays an important role in improving resident outcomes. It does this by having specific and unique environmental features that support independence and reduce behaviours of concern. Yet there is a lack of knowledge and expertise among SDA developers in what is needed to deliver good-practice Robust SDA design beyond the NDIS guidelines.⁴⁴

³⁶ National Disability Insurance Agency (2022) 'NDIS Quarterly Report to disability ministers: 30 June 2022'. Link [here](#).

³⁷ National Disability Insurance Agency (2022) 'NDIS Quarterly Report to disability ministers: 30 June 2022'. Link [here](#).

³⁸ Summer Foundation (2021) 'Specialist Disability Accommodation Supply in Australia'. Link [here](#).

³⁹ Summer Foundation and Housing Hub (2022) 'Community Housing Providers and Disability Housing: An Exploration of SDA'. Link [here](#).

⁴⁰ Summer Foundation (2020) 'Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Explainer for Investors'. Link [here](#).

⁴¹ Summer Foundation (2021) 'SDA in Thin Markets'. Link [here](#).

⁴² Summer Foundation (2021) 'Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Investor Think Tank: Findings and Recommendations' p21. Link [here](#).

⁴³ National Disability Insurance Agency (2019) 'NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation Design Standard'. Link [here](#).

⁴⁴ Homes Victoria (2021) 'Designing person-centred robust Specialist Disability Accommodation'. Link [here](#).

Rural and Remote

The costs of developing SDA in rural and remote areas are higher because of longer distances between towns, poor infrastructure, fewer travel options and additional construction requirements due to extreme weather conditions. Providers in rural and remote locations can work with their local communities and council(s) to explore ways to overcome barriers to cost effective delivery. These could include tax or other concession, grants or subsidised or shared build costs.⁴⁵

“If we know that there are specific people in the area that need SDA, then there isn’t a problem to build for them.”

SDA provider, Western Australia

“Connecting with [building] contractors in remote locations is really difficult. I think you also need to come up with innovative solutions, taking a community by community approach, when looking at SDA designs [and support models] for remote locations.”

SDA provider, Queensland

Recommendation 8: To improve market engagement and signalling, the NDIA must develop and publish an annual national plan for SDA that sets out priority locations and proposed responses to thin or underdeveloped markets.

SDA provider experiences

SDA providers have experienced a challenging time in delivering SDA that is most suited to the needs of people with disability. A lack of market stewardship and demand activation has led to 48% of providers holding vacancies in their SDA properties for at least 6 months. When considering the time it takes to tenant newly developed properties, 63% of providers indicated that it takes 6 months to fill all vacancies in the property or development.⁴⁶

Nearly 78% of providers indicated that the time taken for the NDIA to make decisions on SDA funding is extremely challenging. More than 80% received less income for their SDA than anticipated.⁴⁷

Notably, 9 providers reported they were owed more than \$2.1 million in SDA payments from the NDIA for more than 90 days. This creates a significant impost on SDA providers and SDA investors, creates uncertainty and instability in the market and threatens the security of tenure for participants who are living in impacted SDA.⁴⁸

Recommendation 9: The South Australian Government must work with the NDIA to ensure a better experience for existing and emerging SDA providers across South Australia.

⁴⁵ Summer Foundation (2021) ‘SDA in Thin Markets’. Link [here](#).

⁴⁶ Summer Foundation (2022) ‘Specialist Disability Accommodation Provider Experience Survey’. Link [here](#).

⁴⁷ Summer Foundation (2022) ‘Specialist Disability Accommodation Provider Experience Survey’. Link [here](#).

⁴⁸ Summer Foundation (2022) ‘Specialist Disability Accommodation Provider Experience Survey’. Link [here](#).

Separation of housing and supports

Participants who live independently, in SDA or other housing, require additional supports to assist them to manage day-to-day activities, community engagement and other tasks. These are often funded through SIL or Core Supports funding in an NDIS plan and include everything from support coordination to specific and tailored supports. For a participant to have choice and control, it is essential that the delivery of these supports is by providers who are independent of each other.

“The [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission] must ensure separation of housing from supports and generally enforce requirements for conflicts of interest management.”

SDA community housing provider

A participant’s housing options and security should not be limited by, or dependent on, the disability support a person receives. Although the SDA and SIL organisations may be separate business entities, the outdated practice compromises organisational independence and presents a significant conflict of interest that brings risk to the participant’s safety, housing security and infringes on the right to exercise genuine choice and control. The participant is locked into receiving services from an organisation chosen by the SDA provider and the option to change SIL provider in the future is taken away. The practice eliminates any choice by the participant(s) and restricts their ability to control issues that may arise.⁴⁹ The NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission must ensure complete separation of housing and supports, delivering independence and control to participants.

Recommendation 10: The South Australian Government must collaborate with the NDIA and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to ensure a complete separation of housing and support.

Impact of inappropriate accommodation on the wellbeing of participants

Evidence on the impacts of inaccessible housing for people with disability illustrates the social, emotional, economic and health limitations. Currently, many people with disability who have mobility limitations are not able to visit the homes of family and friends, due to inaccessibility. This drives the divide of the lives of people with and without disability, creating recurring barriers to living an ordinary life.⁵⁰

Many people with disability have fought, or still are fighting, to have a home to call their own. This is not possible when living in aged care, a group home or other housing that does not provide independent space and ownership over the home. Likewise, the time and energy spent navigating inaccessible housing often leads to higher levels of difficulty, stress and fatigue in performing everyday activities at home such as moving around, self-care and caregiving of others.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Summer Foundation (2021) ‘Separation of Housing and Supports Policy Position Statement’. Link [here](#).

⁵⁰ Goodwin I, Davis E, Winkler D, Douglas J, Wellecke C, D’Cruz K, Mulherin P and Liddicoat S (2022) ‘Making homes more accessible for people with mobility impairment: A lived experience perspective’. Australian Journal of Social Issues, 2 May 2022. Link [here](#).

⁵¹ Aplin T, Jonge D and Gustafsson L (2015) ‘Understanding home modifications impact on clients and their family’s experience of home: a qualitative study’. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 62(2), 123–131.

Easier access around the home often results in reduced formal and/or informal support needs, meaning that people have a greater sense of independence and privacy when conducting everyday activities.⁵² A range of activities become easier, including getting in and out of the home, showering/bathing, transferring to the toilet, grooming and moving in and out of bed.⁵³

Demonstrated SDA outcomes

Wellbeing, community integration and health are key areas of improvement for people who live in housing that is designed for and around their needs, to best support the development of capacity, independence and confidence.⁵⁴ Over time, supports can be scaled back to enable the person with disability to better support themselves and manage the life they want to live. For people who have successfully moved into SDA that meets both their disability needs and supports their choice to live independently in their own home, research shows significant benefits across quality of life.

“[SDA] has given me much more freedom to live where I want to live. For the past 30 years I have been stuck in the same house because it is very hard to get another public housing property that meets my needs.”

Darryl - South Australian participant

In a study that evaluated tenant outcomes, delivered by the Summer Foundation and La Trobe University, SDA tenants had a greater level of community participation and were significantly more involved in household tasks such as meal preparation, shopping and electronic social networking post-move.⁵⁵ The Tenant Outcomes Framework developed through research can be used by governments, the NDIA, housing providers and policy makers to evidence the quality of life aspects changed as a result of accessible housing. The framework captures the following outcomes: the subjective lived experience, quality of life, wellbeing, community participation, social connection, environmental impact, autonomy, quality and cost of support and housing and healthcare costs.

Recommendation 11: The South Australian Government should promote the evaluation of outcomes to South Australian participants. This will assist in providing evidence on the outcomes of good home and living supports and enable innovative models to be developed.

⁵² Norin L, Slaug B, Haak M, Jorgensen S, Lexell J and Iwarsson S (2017) ‘Housing accessibility and its associations with participation among older adults living with long-standing spinal cord injury’. *The Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine*, 40(2), 230–240.

⁵³ Lau GWC, Yu ML, Brown T and Locke C (2018) ‘Clients’ perspectives of the effectiveness of home modification recommendations by occupational therapists’. *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, 32(3), 230–250.

⁵⁴ Douglas J, Winkler D, Oliver S, Liddicoat S and D’Cruz K (2022) ‘Moving into new housing designed for people with disability: preliminary evaluation of outcomes’. *Disability and Rehabilitation*. Link [here](#).

⁵⁵ Douglas J, Winkler D, Oliver S, Liddicoat S and D’Cruz K (2022) ‘Moving into new housing designed for people with disability: preliminary evaluation of outcomes’. *Disability and Rehabilitation*. Link [here](#).

Supports in accessible housing

The provision and delivery of supports that supplement the accessible built environment and assistive technology are critical to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of participants. Aside from the built environment, funded supports are the essential feature required to enable participants to live well. This is essential in all housing, more so in housing that does not encompass the design features that a participant needs to live how they want. However, most providers require that the delivery of services is done over a period of at least 2-3 hours per session, meaning participants can still be restricted by provider constraints. While this makes sense for some participants and some periods of the day or activities, nobody wants a support provider in their home when they are not in need of support. This can stifle independence and limit the utilisation of a participant's skills as they try to maximise the support period they are paying for through their NDIS plan.

For participants who live in shared housing, support is often shared. This can mean that participants are set to a schedule of convenience that suits the provider, or again be apportioned support across the day, rather than when actually needed. A number of participants who have the need and preference to live alone, have experienced the benefits of living in a clustered model of SDA where they live alone in their own apartment in the same complex as a number of others. This has provided greater flexibility, independence and the reassurance that support can be called upon in small increments, around 15 minutes, as and when needed. This adds to the choice and control participants have over their lives.

In a recent study by the Summer Foundation and La Trobe University, tenants described valuing the flexibility offered by having a combination of 1:1 and shared support and reported that they got better value from the resources in their NDIS plans. Tenants also appreciated the privacy and opportunities for more independence afforded by living in their own home.⁵⁶

Case Study: Belinda

Belinda is a participant based in Melbourne. She has been living in a High Physical Support SDA apartment for the last 3 years. Her building has approximately 110 apartments, 6 of which are SDA apartments.

Belinda shares her experiences with NDIS supports and services in [this video](#).

Capacity building to support participants to explore accessible housing

Many people with complex and significant disability have been told that a group home or RAC is the only place for them to live and that the supports they are given in these group, institutional settings are their only option. The NDIS has done a lot to shift the focus to the needs of the individual and to individualised supports. However, for people living in institutional settings, this does not seem possible or they have experienced significant challenges in securing the NDIS funding that will enable them to live independently.

⁵⁶ Summer Foundation (2022) 'Support in Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Apartments'. Link [here](#).

Case Study: Housing project in Adelaide

The Housing Hub recently conducted a project of 10 new build SDA apartments in Adelaide. This project has illustrated the challenges that people in institutional settings face in moving out.

Two prospective tenants who took up an offer for a new single occupancy apartment are currently living in RAC. These people were supported to progress their housing journey and have SDA funding added to their plans. They withdrew their applications just before moving in and have cited advice from either their AHP or family as the reason.

One appears to have incorrect advice that they can only have enough support if in RAC, and one person's mother seems to be concerned with the cost of living if living outside RAC.

Both now remain in RAC instead of in a new single occupancy apartment that meets both their housing and support needs.

This emphasises the need for quality capacity building right across participants, families, support coordinators and AHPs.

Supporting a participant, their family and close others to understand what a life could be like outside of an institutional setting requires extensive capacity building and guidance. To support the transition, the Summer Foundation co-designed a series of capacity building resources, in partnership with participants.⁵⁷ All participants involved in the co-design process lived in, or were waiting to move into, an SDA apartment. They previously came from a range of living situations including RAC, group homes and living with ageing family.

The study evaluates the process of purposeful co-design and how this ensures greater outcomes for people with disability, as defined by people with disability. Co-design is used widely across the disability sector, but it often lacks authenticity and control by people with disability. A strengthened and authentic approach to co-design is needed to deliver innovative solutions for participants. This is evidenced in a number of ways including:

- Sharing the stories of people with disability and illuminating how people with disability can successfully move into appropriate housing of their choice
- Creating an opportunity for people with disability to engage in meaningful occupational engagement that enables capacity building
- Demonstrating the work readiness of people with disability and the value of their contribution to the workplace⁵⁸

Recommendation 12: The South Australian Government must provide resources and opportunities for participants, and their close others, to build their capacity to explore the housing options that will adequately meet their needs. This must be across all aspects of housing (public, community, private, SDA) and support options.

⁵⁷ Summer Foundation (2021) 'Storytellers with lived experience strengthening opportunities for people with disability to live independently'. Link [here](#).

⁵⁸ Summer Foundation (2021) 'Storytellers with lived experience strengthening opportunities for people with disability to live independently'. Link [here](#).

Disability housing for Aboriginal people

SDA and the renewed focus on building accessible homes through the NCC is a step forward for people with disability, but not all people consider a home to be what is required of SDA and accessible housing standards. For Aboriginal people, housing must support the extended family, be complementary to cultural and social norms and support connection to Country and Community. This requires housing design that pays attention to customary behaviours around respect, kinship, household structures, sleeping and eating. The NCC, like many Australian standards, are based on international standards and are often not directly applicable to the culturally specific requirements of an Aboriginal community.⁵⁹

For this reason, SDA or accessible housing that does not take into account the needs of the family and the community, will not deliver a good outcome for the individual. In fact, housing may increase the stigma that often surrounds disability in Aboriginal communities, particularly in small and remote communities. The NDIS and state and territory governments must facilitate housing that supports the holistic needs of Aboriginal people with disability, instead of sectioning off disability from the rest of their lives.

Recommendation 13: The South Australian Government must work with Aboriginal participants and the NDIA to co-design models of SDA that are culturally responsive.

Negative impacts on state government services

Where participants are not able to access the housing and support they need from the NDIS, this places additional burden on state government systems. This burden is felt not only in the state government's responsibilities for disability, but also in health, housing, access to community and long-term societal factors.

Impacts outside the disability system

Aged care

There are currently 3,163 younger people, under the age of 65, living in aged care.⁶⁰ Thirty-five young people continue to enter aged care each month. Most younger people enter aged care via hospital; they fall through the gap between the hospital and the disability sectors.

The aged care system is able to assess and provide funding for younger people with disability within 3 days in urgent circumstances (in line with Aged Care Assessment Team's urgent circumstances pathway) and 10 days for most other participants. This excludes the confirmation of aged care placement. The NDIA should likewise make timely and accurate decisions on the level of SDA funding and housing related supports required for participants. Decision timeframes should commence on receipt of all required evidence to inform an SDA determination.

⁵⁹ Grant E, Zillante G, Srivastava A, Tually S and Chong A (2017) 'Lived experiences of housing and community infrastructure among Indigenous people with disability'. AHURI Final Report No. 283, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne. Link [here](#).

⁶⁰ Current as at 31 March 2022. See: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022) 'Younger people in residential aged care'. Link [here](#).

Discharge from hospital

More than 1,100 long-stay participants are stuck in Australian hospitals at a cost of \$860 million per annum. People with disability remain in hospital for months after they are clinically ready for discharge because it takes the NDIA an average of 60 days to determine eligibility and allocate funding for supports in an NDIS plan. Funding for SDA can take much longer.

Last year the NDIA only allocated 31% of the committed \$700 million for SDA (the partial allocation of committed funding also occurred in prior years).⁶¹ The net cost to the federal budget of timely approval of SDA payments would be \$306 million in 2025 and \$117 million in 2031, which is offset by the underspend (69% of \$700 million) on SDA payments.⁶² Providing timely and accurate funding for housing and supports would unburden the state and territory governments that are currently footing the bill for eligible participants in hospital, who are incarcerated and those at risk of, or are, homeless.

Timely discharge will reduce the exposure of this vulnerable group to COVID-19 and free up 1,100 hospital beds nationally in a hospital system under pressure during a pandemic. At a cost of \$2,150 per patient per day, patients with disability in hospital waiting for adequate NDIS funding is a waste of public money.⁶³ Living in a hospital is more than twice as expensive as supporting people with disability to live in the community.

Timely access to NDIS funding for housing and support for people with disability and complex needs who are stuck in hospital has the potential to save the Australian public over \$424 million per annum.⁶⁴

Recommendation 14: The South Australian Government must work with, and influence, the Federal Government to deliver on the reform required to better support people with disability in external systems.

⁶¹ Summer Foundation (2021) 'Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Investor Think Tank: Findings and Recommendations'. Link [here](#).

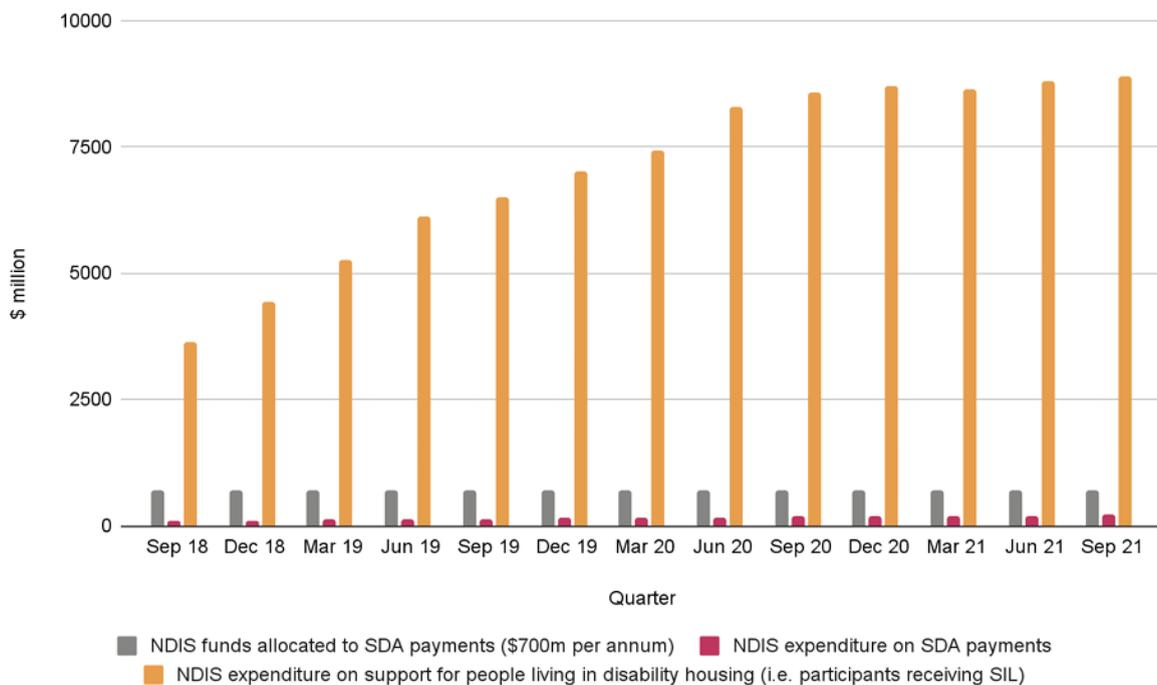
⁶² Projected net costs of timely SDA approval was determined by building a model accounting for SDA payments and support costs for new housing for 17,387 additional participants in the next decade and reduced costs borne by the Commonwealth in Hospital, RAC and the Justice systems. See: National Disability Insurance Agency (2022) 'NDIS Quarterly Report to disability ministers: 30 June 2022'. Link [here](#).

⁶³ 60% patients with moderate care needs ~\$1350 per day, 40% patients with high/complex care needs ~\$3,350 per day

⁶⁴ Summer Foundation (2022) 'Pre Budget Submission 2022'. Link [here](#).

- **Increased NDIS sustainability:** As shown in Figure 3 below, the cost of support in disability housing dwarfs the cost of SDA payments. New SDA is part of the solution to a sustainable NDIS, not part of the problem. Around \$1.1 billion would be saved in disability support costs if participants were living in housing that was fit for purpose (i.e. enabling increased independence and the efficient delivery of support), with access to supports tailored to their individual needs.⁶⁵
- **People with disability:** Would have better rehabilitation and health outcomes. Timely hospital discharge would also reduce their exposure to COVID-19.
- **Tax payers:** Would save over \$424 million per annum on the cost of supporting people with disability, because hospital beds are twice as expensive as community based housing and support for people with disability.
- **Hospital system:** Timely access to NDIS funding will free up 1,100 hospital beds nationally in a hospital system under pressure during a pandemic.

Figure 3. NDIS budget for SDA and expenditure on SDA payments and SIL costs



⁶⁵ Summer Foundation (2021) 'Moving into new housing designed for people with disability: Evaluation of tenant outcomes'. Link [here](#).

Conclusion

State government engagement and action is required to improve outcomes for people with disability who depend on the NDIS to live an ordinary life. Shorter wait times for, and increased access to, appropriate housing and supports will enable a greater quality of life, independence and connection to community. Well designed housing and supports enable a participant to live with family and friends, within their chosen community. Participants must be supported to explore housing and support options and to have their housing needs and preferences respected and upheld. Participants require access to quality information and specialist support coordination to do this.

The NDIA and state and territory governments need to work together to streamline processes and ensure timely and effective support provision for people with disability. The Summer Foundation and the Housing Hub encourage the South Australian Government to improve its interfaces with the NDIS to resolve any issues and ensure people with disability have access to the supports they need, when they need them.

Participants often require access to a wide range of services, both within and outside the scope of the NDIS. Appropriate housing and support is a critical issue for many participants. The South Australian Government needs to work together with the NDIA to ensure that people with disability living in South Australia have adequate options for housing and support that meets their needs and preferences. While the NDIA is responsible for providing timely funding for SDA, the South Australian Government has the responsibility to provide accessible and affordable housing to participants who are not eligible for SDA.

About the Summer Foundation

The Summer Foundation was established in 2006 and exists to permanently stop young people with disability from being forced into residential aged care, ensuring people with disability have access to the support required to be in control of where, how and with whom they live.

The Summer Foundation works to support people with disability who have high and complex disability support needs. It has a strong focus on supporting people with disability to access quality housing, which meets their needs and preferences, and enables them to live well in the community.

The Summer Foundation has established a number of social enterprises, including the Housing Hub and UpSkill. Capacity building of people with disability, their close others, support coordinators, allied health professionals and other key supporters is a central feature of the work of the Summer Foundation.

The Summer Foundation works to influence, challenge and build capacity of the systems, policies and markets that need to change; to permanently eliminate the need for young people with disability to live in aged care.

We focus on unique, high impact interventions that complement the efforts of government, relevant sectors, markets and other organisations. We use a range of tools including:



EVIDENCE BASE

Our research informs the development and evaluation of potential solutions, resources and tools.



EXPERT KNOWLEDGE FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE

We build on the expert knowledge from those with lived experience of the issue of young people in aged care to inform, co-design and evaluate our resources, tools and interventions.



KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT AGENDA AND DRIVERS

We leverage our knowledge of government drivers to establish best practice policy, to facilitate understanding and implementation of policy and inform government agenda.



CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

We use clinical experience that tells us what is happening on the ground to develop and share resources and tools designed to build the capacity of the system and market users.



DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

We design, test, evaluate and improve potential solutions and market interventions to develop social enterprises.

About the Housing Hub

The Housing Hub was established as a Social Enterprise of the Summer Foundation in 2018 with the aim of creating a means for people with disability to learn about housing options and find a home to meet their needs.

Adopting a social enterprise model means that the Housing Hub puts social impact first while utilising business principles to create a sustainable service in the accessible housing system. The Housing Hub is a matching platform that serves the needs of the developing accessible housing market and actively works with housing seekers, supporters (allied health professionals and support coordinators) and providers.

The Housing Hub offers information services for people with disability and their supporters to build knowledge of housing options (e.g. workshops, resources and a phone line) as well as a practical means to find a new home (through online housing search). A [Support Coordination Service](#) has been developed to provide targeted expertise to participants for Home and Living Support requests to the NDIA. This service also offers supporters secondary consultation services.

For providers of housing, the website is a much needed way to connect with potential tenants and promote their services in the new, market based environment created by the NDIS. The Housing Hub also consults with housing providers to build their understanding of customers and the market they operate in. A [Tenancy Matching Service](#) is offered to support quality SDA Providers to find tenants for new SDA projects across Australia.

The Housing Hub [regularly releases research](#) on the accessible housing market to contribute to developing knowledge across investors, developers, providers, seekers and supporters on the accessible housing market.

While the Housing Hub website is free to use for seekers, supporters and providers, some [premium products](#) and services are offered to providers, developers and investors for a fee. This results in 50% of the revenue of the social enterprise being generated through fees while the balance is from philanthropy.

There are 50 team members employed by the Housing Hub with 40% identifying as having lived experience of disability. More than 10 members of the team reside in SDA dwellings bringing critical lived experience to the work across the Housing Hub teams in the community.

The Housing Hub has a Theory of Change and Outcomes Measurement Framework in place to ensure that social impact is at the heart of everything we do and that we contribute to meaningful outcomes for seekers, providers and the accessible housing system as a whole.