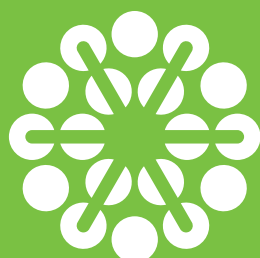


RIGHTS
NEED
CHOICES



CADR PROSPECTUS 2015 – 2018

An invitation to join
the 'rights need choices'
applied research agenda



Centre for
Applied Disability
Research

An Initiative of National Disability Services





ABOUT

The Centre for Applied Disability Research (CADR) was established to improve the wellbeing of Australians with disability by gathering insights, building understanding and sharing knowledge.

For more information visit cadr.org.au

INTRODUCTION

One of the key priorities of National Disability Services is to produce and share research and analysis that promotes good policy and service progress.

With the assistance of the NSW Government, NDS established the Centre for Applied Disability Research (CADR) in late 2013 to deliver on this strategic priority. This document sets out the Centre's open invitation to join our 'rights need choices' research agenda. Our plan is ambitious, and can't be achieved alone. We hope it will create new opportunities for collaboration, so we can work together toward shaping once in a generation disability reform. The current disability research agenda lacks critical mass, is not well coordinated, and is disconnected from a sustainable funding base. To tackle this, we need to create a mature research base with focus, depth, quality and coherence.

CONTEXT

One of the key findings of the 2014 audit of disability research in Australia (the Audit) was 'that there is no critical mass of research on topics of priority to the National Disability Strategy, the National Disability Research and Development Agenda and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)'.

CADR's research program has been informed by both the Audit and our understanding of NDS member research interests and capacity. Through analysing these findings, we have identified an urgent need for more applied and translational research. People living with disability, their families and carers, and the service providers they choose need to know 'what works, for whom, under what circumstances, at what cost' if the 'right services are to be available at the right place and time, for the right price'. Better outcomes for people living with disability are closely linked to effective knowledge translation – i.e. research that can be put into practice.

“ There is no critical mass of research on topics of priority to the National Disability Strategy, the National Disability Research and Development Agenda and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). ”

– Key finding:
2014 Audit of
Disability Research

The key question we need to address is: are the right services available at the right place, at the right time, for the right price?

PURPOSE

This paper builds on our CADR launch prospectus and provides details of our priorities for 2015–2018. It emphasises the importance of partnerships to our approach to carrying out applied research.

An open invitation is issued to people with disability, NDS members, disability researchers, consumer advocacy organisations, governments and other stakeholders interested in partnering with CADR to work on the research priorities outlined below.

STATE OF THE SECTOR

An analysis of the factors that support sector development and sustainability, and improved organisational capability is required to better understand how to achieve better quality of life outcomes for people living with disability. The key question we need to address is:

Are the right services available at the right place, at the right time, for the right price?

To answer this, our research agenda explores research priorities under two broad questions:

1. Is there an enabling policy and regulatory environment for disability service provision and for facilitating effective responses to consumer demand, need and preferences?
2. Is an efficient and effective market for disability services evolving, and what are the features of the service sector response in relation to:
 - market composition and structure
 - workforce sustainability
 - translating evidence into practice
 - measuring and demonstrating economic, community and social impact, especially the employment of people with disability
 - the interface between the disability and mainstream service systems.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR 2015 – 2018

The following 10 research priorities will guide our applied research activity in the medium term.

1. Policy and regulatory environment

This research priority will examine whether the policy and regulatory frameworks for the disability market and the wider not-for-profit sector enable the service system to work as set out in the National Disability Strategy, the NDIS Act, and related welfare reforms. The views of disability sector leaders are key to this line of inquiry.

Key lines of inquiry

- What are the drivers of business confidence among disability providers?
- How should the sector be regulated, and how are disability service providers responding to policy and regulatory settings?

‘State of the Disability Sector’ report

NDS’s annual ‘State of the Disability Sector’ report includes a business confidence index for the disability sector, which tracks how disability service providers are performing during this period of major reform. It also includes an analysis of the challenges of implementing the NDIS around Australia, along with a broad review of disability policy and trends.

“ Only 1 out of 10 disability service organisations believe the Government is anticipating, or responding to, their needs. ”

Source:
Business
Confidence Survey
NDS, 2015

“ 7 out of 10 organisations experienced increased demand for their services in 2014. ”

Source:
Business
Confidence Survey
NDS, 2015

2. Demand, need and preferences

This research priority is focused on better understanding the demand and need for quality services and supports as well as how people with disability (as citizens, consumers and NDIS participants) are making decisions and expressing their preferences in the evolving marketplace.

Key lines of inquiry

- What factors are driving informed consumer choice for disability services and supports (e.g. price, reputation, quality, the extent to which services are evidence-based)?
- What does data tell us about the changing nature of consumer preferences for disability services and supports?
- How are consumers accessing information about what works, for whom, under what circumstances, and at what cost? Is this information considered reliable and delivered in ways that support informed choice?

CADR has started work examining disability consumers' preferences, and tracking key stakeholder support for the NDIS.

3. Market composition and structure

Understanding how markets are evolving in response to the advent of individualised funding is a focus of this research priority. Research about how costing and pricing practice is maturing at the provider level is also highly relevant.

Key lines of inquiry

- What changes are occurring to the structure and composition of the supply side for specialist disability services and supports?
 - Are new organisational forms appearing in the market?
 - What partnerships and strategic alliances are occurring?
- Which parts of the maturing market remain competitive and/or financially sustainable?
- What are the potential consequences of these changes?

Work in this area

- A survey of blindness, low vision and rehabilitation services. NDS worked with the Australian Blindness Forum and Vision 2020 to prepare a snapshot of this sector.
- Research focused on creating a set of principles and definitions that can be used to achieve a mature and structured approach to costing and pricing practice. NDS worked with Curtin University to develop a Costing and Pricing Framework for Disability Services.
- Research with Curtin University Not for Profit Initiative focused on collecting and analysing the financial accounts and performance of the disability provider sector. This research also includes a survey and review of partnership and other market and organisational responses.

“ One quarter of organisations operate under joint working arrangements. These are mainly through partnerships (15%) and consortia (11%). ”

Source:
Business
Confidence Survey
NDS, 2015

“ When fully implemented, the NDIS will lead to between 25,000 and 40,000 new jobs for persons with significant disability. These employment gains will increase GDP by between approximately \$7 – 11 billion in 2015 dollars. ”

Source: Economic Benefits of the NDIS, NDS 2015

4. Workforce sustainability

The NDIS amplifies and modifies disability workforce demand; the rapid growth will pose significant workforce sustainability risks. This research priority is aimed at understanding where labour market shortages for particular skills exist in order to improve the overall success of reforms aimed at increasing social and economic participation.

Key lines of inquiry

- What key disability workforce risks and patterns are taking place and what are the implications for ensuring the right skills are in the right place at the right time for the right price?
- Are disability providers fostering a high level of employee engagement?
- What trends are occurring in work health and safety?
- What are best practice approaches to recognising and responding to allegations and incidents of abuse and neglect in different risk environments?

NDS led the development of the National Disability Workforce Strategy with research-based advice for the Australian Government in 2014. This work has also informed input into the National Workforce Innovation Network, led by NDS. The NDS ‘Zero Tolerance’ project is developing a framework and research to help service providers to recognise and respond to allegations and incidents of abuse and neglect in different risk environments.

5. Economic impact

The NDIS will improve economic outcomes for people with disability. The economic impact research priority is concerned with assessing the economic benefits of employment arising from the implementation of the NDIS.

Key line of inquiry

- What economic gains will the NDIS create?

Work in this area

- Economic modelling of the economic (employment) benefits of the NDIS.

6. Community and social impact

The NDIS is about improving social outcomes for people with disability, which will benefit society as a whole. This research priority is concerned with the contribution of disability service providers to individual quality of life, community wellbeing and broader social capital creation.

Key lines of inquiry

- What approaches to measuring, demonstrating and communicating social outcomes or impact measurement are most prevalent and effective?
- What are the most promising staff practices and organisational strategies for supporting community participation of people with a cognitive impairment?

Work in this area

- The development of the NDS Social Impact Measurement Tool
- A research project with La Trobe University's Living with Disability Research Centre to explore the required organisational capacity, culture & specific workforce skills & capabilities required to facilitate active community participation.

7. Interface of specialist disability and mainstream services

Disability service providers play a key role at the interface with mainstream services to make sure any 'gaps, cracks and overlaps' in the human services system do not impede quality of life outcomes for people with disability. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has asserted the principles that determine the responsibilities of the NDIS in relation to the obligations of other service delivery systems to work together. These obligations are reinforced by the principles, strategies and targets of the National Disability Strategy (2010–2020). The role of 'Information, Linkages and Capacity Building' services (formerly known as Tier 2) is directly implicated here.

Key lines of inquiry

- What outcomes do people living with disability, their families and carers experience at the interface between 'mainstream' service systems and specialist disability markets? How do service providers contribute to these outcomes?

Disability service providers play a key role at the interface with mainstream services to make sure any 'gaps, cracks and overlaps' in the human services system do not impede quality of life outcomes for people with disability.

“ NDS estimates there could be as many as 200,000 Australians with disability who are not working now, but want to work and could do so if they had the right assistance. ”

Source: Economic Benefits of the NDIS, NDS 2015

8. Employment of people with disability

Australia ranks poorly in international comparisons of the economic participation of people with disability. Improving labour force participation rates are critical to the success of current reforms.

This research priority explores successful approaches to sustainable and meaningful employment outcomes for people with disabilities. We need research that will help us ‘re-imagine’ employment support for Australians living with disability, as well as employer responses and attitudes. This includes research that facilitates sector transition to implement innovative support approaches along with evidence about the emergence of micro-businesses and transition to social enterprises and their effectiveness.

Key lines of inquiry

- What are the features of effective and outcomes-based employment support programs (including transition to work) for people with disabilities?
- What are the organisational and individual factors that impede or enhance the employment of people with mental health and disability? To what extent are employer attitudes toward people with disability a barrier to their employment and how are these most effectively overcome?

Work in this area

- An Australian Research Council (ARC) linkage grant project with Dr Ann Neville (Australian National University) to investigate quality of life outcomes measurement for people with disability in open employment.
- Investigation of the attitudes of employers in relation to the employment of people with disability.
- Research on best practice in ‘transition to work’ programs, including an evaluation of the NDS ‘Ticket to Work’ initiative.

9. People with disability as citizen consumers

People with disability are active consumers in a range of markets, exercising ‘choice and control’ to purchase services and supports that assist them to lead a normal life and achieve personal goals relating to social and economic participation.

The consumer preferences or ‘voice’ of people with disability in markets adjacent to specialist disability services – such as assistive technology, aids and adaptations to living environments, or housing and accommodation – should expect to be heard more loudly and clearly.

Key lines of inquiry

- What are the consumer preferences of people with disability for services and products that will help them achieve greater social and economic participation?
- How is “informed choice” supported in these markets?
- What is the experience of people with disability, their families and carers as consumers in these markets?

10. Cross cutting theme: culturally proficient responses

There are major evidence gaps in relation to the nature, extent, experience and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and adults who have a disability. A comprehensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research agenda is required to inform culturally appropriate and effective policy and service delivery within the context of the NDIS and related reforms. To achieve that, CADR is committed to giving a voice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and young people and adults with disability, and making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, research methods and ethics an integral part of disability research.

Similarly, the profile, experience, needs or issues affecting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is not addressed by much of the research identified in the Audit.

CADR is keen to identify and work with relevant partners in this space to ensure that culturally proficient and inclusive research activities are promoted.

CADR is committed to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, research methods and ethics an integral part of disability research.

“ About half of organisations consider they have sufficient resources/ internal capacity to improve services or innovate. ”

Source:
Business
Confidence Survey
NDS, 2015

BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY AND RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

Current investment in disability research is low and often disconnected from the needs of the sector. Research findings can get lost, and are not always communicated effectively to organisations and practitioners that could benefit from the information. Helping to build the evidence base for providers and others to better understand “what works, for whom, under what circumstances, at what cost” is central to an effective and efficient market. The NDIS is based on insurance principles consistent with investment over a lifetime and consequently, relies on the fact that best practice models are quickly identified and translated into practice.

CADR is actively building research relationships with its members, academics, government and others with an interest in evidence-based policy and programs. CADR works with research institutions and publishers to facilitate knowledge translation and assist service providers to develop their research focus in a number of ways:

- hosting ‘Research to Action’ events
- publishing a regular newsletter (‘Lines of Inquiry’)
- maintaining a clearinghouse of translational and applied research resources
- arranging for discounted access to relevant journals.

Key lines of inquiry

- What is the scale and scope of ‘research minded’ activities undertaken by specialist disability service providers?
- What are the barriers and enablers to the effective translation of research into practice in the context of promoting innovation & entrepreneurship?

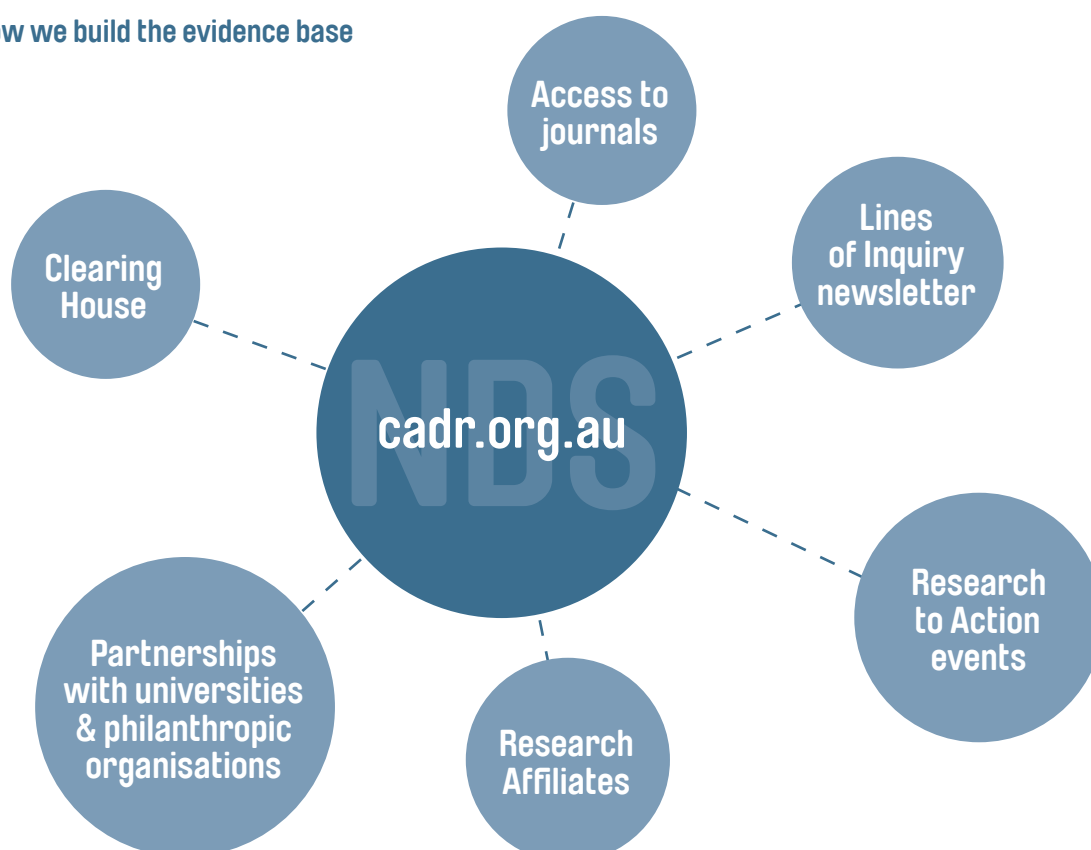
CADR RESEARCH AFFILIATES – A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

CADR maintains relationships with universities, corporate research and disability advocacy organisations in order to help deliver on our research priorities, in some cases under Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) arrangements.

NDS has established a membership category specifically for researchers interested in disability, to facilitate closer relationships to industry. Benefits of NDS Research Affiliate membership include:

- access to industry news and analysis
- discounted rates on a range of professional development opportunities, including CADR's Research to Action events, NDS conferences
- access to discounts on external online journal subscriptions, and
- listing in an online Research Affiliate directory to help facilitate connections with peers and ensure NDS members can access subject matter expertise.

How we build the evidence base



INDUSTRY NEXUS

CADR brings a range of expertise, experience and networks to our research priorities. Drawing on NDS's member base of over 1,000 specialist disability service providers and key research partners, the work program is designed to map, monitor and analyse changes in the wider disability sector. This sector-level analysis will also help inform national policy settings, particularly those relating to market regulation or 'stewardship', and ensure services are designed and delivered on what works in practice.

CADR is a research gateway to this network of providers and an ideal partner for researchers interested in once in a generation social policy reforms aimed at enhancing the social and economic participation of people with disability. Many NDS members already have long standing and well developed relationships with disability researchers and active research programs.

CADR can also facilitate access to the growing and increasingly diverse workforce for disability. National Disability Practitioners (NDP), a Division of NDS, is a membership association taking the lead in strengthening occupational standards, building sector networks and creating professional development opportunities for those working to support people with disability, including frontline workers, senior managers, clinicians and administrators.

POLICY IMPACT

CADR aims to move beyond pure research, to apply new ideas in the field by bridging academic knowledge and sector practice. Our work is intentionally applied and focuses on policy relevant questions. This work interfaces with, and supports, NDS's focus on advocacy and policy development.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

CADR has an Advisory Board to guide and monitor activity in relation to strategic research directions, chaired by Dr. Richard Madden from the University of Sydney. The board also includes representation from service providers, leading disability researchers and consumer advocacy representatives.

INVITATION TO SUBMIT RESEARCH PROPOSALS

An open invitation is issued to people with disability, NDS members, disability researchers, consumer advocacy organisations, governments and other stakeholders interested in partnering with CADR.

CADR has established a set of criteria for assessing support for research proposals. The proposed research must:

- fit within the State of the Disability Sector research priority areas outlined above and
- deliver timely, policy and program relevant translational research outputs or educational products.

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NDS gratefully acknowledges the support of the NSW Government in establishing the NDS Centre for Applied Disability Research

