



Afternoon Session G

Discussion Paper 13

Disability - What are the housing needs of Aboriginal people with a disability?

CHALLENGE OUTLINE:

1. The AIHW found that “In 2015, around 1 in 5 Australians reported living with disability and 1.4 million Australians reported a ‘severe or profound core activity limitation’.”
2. Aboriginal Australians are twice as likely to have a severe or profound disability.¹
3. Specialist homeless services have noted a significant increase in people with a disability seeking housing and support services.
4. Across Australia almost 29,000 people with one or more limitations with a core activity (self-care, mobility, and/or communication) presented to an SHS agency for assistance in 2016–17².
5. Appropriate housing and support services in Australia for people living with disability are more difficult to access than for people without a core activity limitation.
6. Carers of people with a disability in Aboriginal communities are more likely to have major health issues of their own. This underlines the importance of supported accommodation being available and culturally safe for community members who need it.
7. It is a critical challenge to understand the extent to which the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is meeting the housing aspirations of Aboriginal Victorians. (The NDIS includes four main categories: persons with daily core needs, self-management limitations, psychiatric disabilities, and early intervention.)
8. The NDIS is designed to assist participants to live independently. This includes:
 - Supports that build people's capacity to live independently in the community (living skills, money and household management, social skills and behavioural management)
 - Home modifications to the participant's own home or a private rental property and on a case-by-case basis in social housing
 - Support with personal care, such as assistance with showering and dressing
 - Help around the home where the participant is unable to undertake these tasks due to their disability, such as assistance with cleaning and laundry.
 - Contributions to the cost of accommodation in situations where the participant has a need for specialised housing due to their disability (however this is only expected to meet the needs of 6% of NDIS users).

¹ AIHW *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: 2015*

² AIHW *Housing Assistance in Australia 2018*

9. Currently around 5% of NDIS clients (all service types) nationally are Aboriginal, however NACCHO believes this constitutes a significant under-representation rate.
10. *Jono Bredin (founder of [Calling the Brain's Bluff](#))* estimates that 127,000 of all NDIS participants in Australia will have an unmet need for affordable housing. The Commonwealth argues this is the responsibility of the mainstream housing system. (The Conversation)
11. Understanding the barriers to NDIS specialist accommodation services is important. These may include an absence of culturally safe services, socio-economic barriers such as low income and a reluctance to identify as having a disability.
12. People experiencing mental illness or a psychiatric disability are also more likely to be homeless. 11.4% of Aboriginal Australians who present to homeless services do so primarily because of a mental health issue; a further 8.6% with issues of mental health and family violence and a further 4.6% with issues of family violence and mental health and drugs/alcohol. (Report on Government Services (RoGs) 2019)
13. These data suggest major failures in support systems for people with mental illness which are contributing significantly to housing crisis and homelessness of some of our most vulnerable people.



Source: Aboriginal Disability Sector

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

1. The capacity of the NDIS to meet the needs of Aboriginal Victorians with a disability should be carefully evaluated with a view to ensuring it is capable of providing culturally safe accommodation options.
2. Funding and design of the social housing system should be predicated on the understanding it is expected to house a significant proportion of NDIS clients.
3. More incentives and support are required for Aboriginal organisations to become NDIS service providers. (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO))

4. It is incumbent that the Royal Commission into Mental Health in Victoria addresses the relationship between mental health and housing, both the effect that inadequate housing has in compounding poor mental health and the effect that mental illness has on destabilising housing security.