

- *Consistent with the UNCRPD, the NDIS promised to enable participants to choose where they live, with whom they live and who provides support. Participants in group homes, where support (SIL) and housing are joined together, do not have these choices.*
- *SIL costs are escalating and evidence indicates that quality of life and outcomes of participants with SIL are not good.*
- *What can the NDIA do to facilitate the provision of housing and support options that offer the promised choices.*

The NDIA needs facilitate the development of new contemporary options and transform existing ones.

The need for change

Change is required because:

- Group homes lack the benefits of other housing and support options
- Group homes are expensive and the costs are escalating
- Many residents of group homes have profiles similar to people in less restricted environments
- Group homes are associated with abuse and neglect.

Factors in group homes that put people at risk include:

- Inappropriate placements
- Workforce issues
- Cultural issues
- Isolation.

The NDIS promise and practice

The promise

- Separation of housing from support
- Support for participants to make decisions and be in control of their lives
- Promotion of high quality and innovative supports
- Expert guidance to enable participants to explore housing and support options best suited to their goals
- Expert guidance to 'make it all happen'

The practice

- Separation not required
- Support for decision-making not available
- Group homes remain dominant option although NDIA commitment to ILOs
- Exploring Housing Options Package (EHOP) removed
- Support Coordination roles not specialised so participants often assisted by Support Coordinators without specialised knowledge.

So, the NDIS needs to

- Separate housing and support
- Avoid conflict of interest by requiring the provider of Support Coordination to be independent of the provider of SIL (or its affiliate) for participants in closed systems
- Commission options for irregular support
- Reinstate a planned approach to exploring options of housing and support
- Ensure funding for any assessments required for plan review
- Move away from SIL including discourage use of SIL in non-conforming facilities.
- In the interim, improve SIL including
 - Make SIL more transparent and flexible
 - Reduce delays on SIL quotes
 - Ensure that participants have an active role in their development
- Publish examples of good practice such as the approach used by Summer Foundation.