

The impact of investing in research co-design

National Disability Research Partnership

Written by Dr Ellen Skladzien for the National Disability Research Partnership

August 2026



National Disability
Research Partnership

Acknowledgements

The National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. The peoples on whose land we live and work have lived on and cared for Country for thousands of generations, and their land has never been ceded. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, values and worldviews, and to Elders past and present. We respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the world's first researchers and acknowledge the wisdom and diversity of Indigenous knowledge systems.

The NDRP would like to acknowledge all the 2025 funded research co-design projects and team members, including people with disability, researchers and partners, who contributed to this funding round.

Acknowledgement of funding

This activity received grant funding from the Australian Government as an initiative under Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031, delivered through the National Disability Research Partnership.

Content note

This report discusses research about the safety and wellbeing of people with disability. It includes references to topics that some readers may find difficult or distressing, including violence, abuse, neglect, discrimination, restrictive practices, trauma and experiences of systems and services that have caused harm.

The report brings together findings from a range of research projects and reflects the experiences, perspectives and language of different people and communities. People and communities use different language to describe themselves, their identities and their experiences. Throughout this report, we have respected the language and terminology preferred and used by the people, communities and research teams whose work is being represented. As a result, terminology may vary across the report.

Support

If anything in this report raises concerns for you or someone you know, support is available.

- 1800RESPECT – national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support: 1800 737 732.
- Lifeline – crisis support: 13 11 14.
- If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 000.

Suggested Citation

National Disability Research Partnership (2026) The impact of investing in research co-design, written by Dr Ellen Skladzien for the National Disability Research Partnership

Contents

Executive summary.....	4
Key findings from the investment in co-design	5
About 2025 Seed Funding	6
The impact of 2025 Seed Funding.....	11
Changing the research.....	11
Defining safety	12
Strengthening capacity.....	14
What enabled good co-design.....	16
Disability Leadership	17
Building trust	18
Accessibility.....	19
Time	20
Context	21
Sharing power	22
Cultural safety	23
Psychosocial safety.....	24
Investment.....	25
What makes co-designed research harder.....	27
Lack of data and evidence	27
Systems	28
Conclusion	31
Key findings from 2025 Seed Funding.....	32
Appendix 1: The 2025 Seed Funding projects at a glance.....	33
Stream 1: Co-design of research proposals.....	33
Stream 2: Knowledge synthesis.....	36
Appendix 2: 2025 Seed Funding project reports	37
Stream 1: Co-design of research proposals.....	37
Stream 2: Knowledge synthesis.....	38

Executive summary

The National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) was established to strengthen disability research in Australia by bringing together people with disability, researchers, governments and community organisations to shape research that is relevant, inclusive and informed by lived experience.

In 2025, the NDRP funded its first round of competitive grants. 2025 Seed Funding enabled work to co-design research projects and the existing evidence on the theme of safety. Fifteen projects were funded across two streams. Thirteen projects involved people with disability, researchers and partner organisations working together to co-design research proposals. Two projects co-designed and analysed the existing evidence on priority safety issues.

This report draws together what was learned across those fifteen projects completed over eight to twelve months from July 2025.

This investment in this funding purposely gave people with disability the opportunity to shape research before the research questions and methods had been decided. This changed the direction of future research. Research questions were reframed and new priorities emerged through the co-design process.

The projects also identified common conditions for meaningful co-design. Disability leadership, accessibility, trusted relationships, adequate time, shared decision-making and dedicated funding were consistently described as essential. Across the projects, these conditions supported meaningful co-design, although they looked different in different communities.

Systemic issues within Australia's disability research system were evident across the 2025 Seed Funding projects. Researchers described how traditional funding models rarely allow people with disability to be involved in the early design of research because proposals must usually be fully developed before funding is available. The projects also identified broader systemic issues with data, including gaps in available evidence, systems that fail to capture the information that matters most to people with disability, and a failure to implement existing evidence. Together, these findings show the importance of investing both in individual research projects and in the relationships and systems that support disability-led research.

2025 Seed Funding was designed to produce research proposals rather than new research findings, but the projects have already had an impact. People with disability worked in paid research roles and developed confidence and skills, organisations developed new partnerships and ways of working, researchers applied what they had learned in other projects, and some universities began reviewing systems that create barriers to employing researchers with disability.

This report provides practical evidence about the impact of funding early co-design. It shows that involving people with disability at the earliest stages of research changes the research itself. The report also identifies the conditions required for meaningful co-design and highlights changes that could strengthen disability-led research in Australia.

Table 1 Factors for meaningful co-design

Factors for meaningful co-design	
Disability leadership	People with disability shaped research priorities, methods and decisions.
Trust	Trust must be built before meaningful co-design can occur.
Accessibility	Accessibility supports need to be tailored to the need of the community.
Time	Time is a requirement for co-design and for some communities or cohorts additional time is required.
Context	There can be barriers to participating in co-design or research because of different settings or systems.
Sharing power	Consultation is not enough. People with disability must have leadership roles and decision-making power.
Cultural safety	Communities should shape how co-design is undertaken.
Psychosocial safety	Safe participation requires deliberate planning and ongoing support.
Investment	Co-design requires dedicated investment.

Key findings from the investment in co-design

1. Funding co-design before research begins changes the research.

Early co-design means that people with disability can have a say in how research is designed. This means that the research questions reflect what is important to the community. Across 2025 Seed Funding projects there were significant changes in how projects were designed and what the priorities were based on the involvement of people with disability.

2. Co-design depends on creating the right conditions.

Disability leadership, trust, accessibility, adequate time, shared decision-making and dedicated investment consistently supported meaningful co-design across diverse projects.

3. Co-design looks different in different communities.

There was no single model of successful co-design. Effective approaches reflected the strengths and contexts of different communities.

4. Research systems continue to create barriers to disability-led research.

The projects identified barriers across funding arrangements, institutional systems, ethics processes and employment that made participation more difficult. These challenges reflected broader features of the research system. Strengthening disability research requires investment in the systems that support research, as well as investment in individual research projects.

5. Investment in co-design builds capability across the research system.

2025 Seed Funding shows the impact that early investment can have on the skills and experiences of people with disability, researchers and the development of partnerships. This early investment will lead to lasting strengthening of the system.

About 2025 Seed Funding

In 2025, the National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) funded its first round of competitive research grants. 2025 Seed Funding invested \$900,000 across fifteen projects on the topic of safety. The NDRP receives its funding to support these grants from the Australian Government as an initiative under Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031.

2025 Seed Funding took a different approach to research funding. Rather than funding research itself, it funded the work needed to co-design disability research proposals and co-design knowledge synthesis. It provided time and resources for people with disability, researchers, service providers and other partners to build relationships, strengthen disability-led research capacity and work together to shape future research. Every funded project addressed an aspect of safety for people with disability, but from different perspectives and with different communities.

Stream 1 – Co-design of research proposals funded thirteen projects. These projects brought people with disability together with researchers, service providers and other partners to co-design future research. The aim was to develop strong, co-designed research proposals that could be taken forward for future funding.

Stream 2 – Co-design of knowledge synthesis funded two projects. These projects used co-design methods to bring together what is already known about a priority issue and where important gaps remain.

The 2025 Seed Funding was aligned with the NDRP strategic priorities of “funding research led by and with disability” and “strengthening capacity for disability research”. The funding recognised that high-quality disability-led research requires time to build relationships, develop trust, strengthen the capacity of people with disability and researchers to work together. The grants invested in this early stage of the research process, with intended benefits extending beyond individual funding proposals.

The intended outcomes of the 2025 Seed Funding were as follows¹:

- new or strengthened disability-led research partnerships. Research teams, people and organisations will have worked together, shared knowledge with each other and collaboratively produced work in new ways that they would not have otherwise been able to.
- a strengthened sense of shared purpose and contribution to the NDRP’s vision for policy and practice in Australia that is transformed by disability-led research.
- for Stream 1, proposals for high-quality, inclusive, disability-led research that are used in applications for research funding, either to a future NDRP funding round, or to another funding body.
- for Stream 2, information on the current state of evidence, including evidence gaps, about key issues is made accessible to those who can change policy, practice and/or programs, and/or identify future research needed to improve safety for people with disability.

Success was not defined by whether projects ultimately received research funding from the NDRP. Instead, the aim was to strengthen disability-led research by building partnerships, increasing capability,

¹National Disability Research Partnership (2025). 2025 NDRP Research Funding Round 1 Grant Guidelines.

generating new knowledge and developing high-quality research proposals that could be pursued through a range of funding opportunities.

Tables 2 and 3 provide an overview of the funded projects. Appendix 1 provides a summary of each project.

This report synthesises the findings of the fifteen projects funded in 2025 Seed Funding. It draws on the final reports produced by each project team. For the Stream 1 projects, the final reports are not made publicly available as they contain confidential information and Intellectual Property owned by the teams that will help teams apply for future research funding.

Executive Summaries for each project are available on the [NDRP website](#).

For the Stream 2 projects the full Research Summary Reports will be available on the [NDRP's website](#).

The full list of project reports is available at Appendix 2.

Stream 1: Co-design of research proposals

Table 2 Overview of 2025 Seed Funding funded projects

Project	Lead organisation	Partner organisations	Community	Research topic
Sometimes I'm too safe: exploring the dignity of risk	The University of Queensland	Down Syndrome Australia Down Syndrome Queensland	Adults with intellectual disability	Dignity of risk and decision-making
Building culturally safe support for refugee communities	Deakin University	Bendigo Community Health Service Amicus Community Service Lifely Intereach.	People with disability from Karen and Afghan Hazara refugee backgrounds	Culturally safe disability support
Pleasure-centred sexual safety for neurodivergent people	La Trobe University	Women with Disabilities Victoria, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre	Neurodivergent women, trans and gender-diverse people	Sexual safety, pleasure and wellbeing

Project	Lead organisation	Partner organisations	Community	Research topic
		Reducing Gender-based Violence Network.		
Keeping people with disability safe on farms	Ability Agriculture Foundation	Central Queensland University Institute for Future Farming Systems.	People with disability working in agriculture	Farm safety
Psychological safety for children with 'behaviours of concern'	University of Melbourne	Heads Together for Brain Injury Yellow Ladybugs.	Children with disability and families	Psychological safety in schools
Safe Homes: alternatives to group homes	University of Melbourne	Inclusion Australia.	People with intellectual disability and complex support needs	Individual support arrangements
Safety Beyond Barriers: Diverse Family Perspectives on Violence and Disability	Children and Young People with Disability Australia	Australian Institute of Family Studies	Families of children with disability	Family violence
Feeling Safe in Your Own Skin	MedTech Hub Swinburne University of Technology	Genyus Network.	People with lived experience of disability accessing health and rehabilitation services	Psychosocial safety in healthcare
Culturally grounded safety for First Nations women with disability (Hidden in plain sight)	Deaf Indigenous Community Consultancy	University of Melbourne Continence Nurses Australia.	First Nations women with disability	Continence, safety and access to services

Project	Lead organisation	Partner organisations	Community	Research topic
A rights-based exploration of safety in home aged care for older CALD women with disability	Australian Association of Gerontology	National Ethnic Disability Alliance	Older CALD women with disability in aged care	Rights and safety in home aged care
Safe-MEALS for people with swallowing difficulties	University of Technology Sydney	Onemda Melba Support Services Speech Pathology Australia Jeffrey Chan Consulting	People with dysphagia	Mealtime safety
Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness	Able Australia	Macquarie University NextSense	People with deafblindness	Mobility and community safety
Reproductive justice and neurodivergence	University of Melbourne	Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT Sexual Health Quarters WA Sexual Health Victoria.	Neurodivergent people	Reproductive rights and healthcare

Stream 2: Co-design of knowledge synthesis

Table 3 Overview of 2025 Seed Funding funded projects

Project	Lead organisation	Partner organisations	Community	Research topic
Barriers Within Bars: Indigenous people with disability in prison	University of Melbourne	AccessAble Braille Enterprises.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability in the justice system	Disability and incarceration

Project	Lead organisation	Partner organisations	Community	Research topic
Autistic people's safety across life stages	University of Western Australia	Reframing Autism ASPECT Research Centre for Autism Practice Empower Autism	Autistic people across the lifespan	Safety across the lifespan

The impact of 2025 Seed Funding

Changing the research

“

When people with lived experience had real authority, decisions changed in meaningful ways...

Safe in my own skin

Across the projects, people with disability changed both what was researched and how it would be researched. Research questions were reframed, methods changed and new priorities emerged through the co-design process.

For example, coresearchers in the *Feeling Safe in Your Own Skin* project, led by MedTechVic Hub, Swinburne University of Technology, rejected impairment simulation as an approach to virtual reality and instead shaped its use as a tool for exploring relationships, interaction and power in healthcare. The team also changed its methods, adopting creative and movement-based approaches so co-researchers could express experiences that discussion alone could not reach.²

project, began with a plan to examine how safety is produced in aged care through formal and informal policies. Feedback from team members with lived experience shifted the project towards focusing on individuals' understanding of their own rights and the development of a tool for mapping rights.³

The *Safe-MEALS* project, led by the University of Technology Sydney, used co-design to support their understanding of research priorities and methodology. As the team put it, "This enabled us to understand more about how to prevent food choking, and co-design of priorities for future research questions and of the methods for a new project."⁴

The *Cultivating Safety in Agriculture for Persons with Disability* project, led by the Ability Agriculture Foundation, changed what it was studying. It had planned to look at the safety of individual workers with disability. Through co-design with people working in agriculture, employers, farm safety professionals and allied health practitioners, it shifted to examining the whole safety ecosystem around a worker, and co-designed an ecosystem framework identifying where responsibility for safety falls and where it is missed.⁵

The *Barriers within Bars* synthesis used codesign to shape the focus of their literature review. Co-design included three consultation sessions and two interviews involving Indigenous people with disability,

² McDonald, R., Rixon, C., Smith, M., Bowditch, C., Feldner, H., Lambert, E., Phillips, H., McCormick, J., Paay, J., Vincs, K., Triantis, P., Taffe, S., Kramer, S. & Bridge, C. (2026). *Safe in my own skin*. MedTechVic Hub, Swinburne University of Technology.

³ Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026) *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁴ Hemsley, B., Given, F., Debono, D., O'Connor, J., Jurgens, A., Baldac, S., & Chan, J. (2026). *Safe-MEALS: Safe Food, Enjoyable Meals, Advocacy and Lived Experiences*. The University of Technology Sydney, Melba Support Services, Onemda, Speech Pathology Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁵ Clarke, J., Colusso, P., Corish, N., & McDonald, N. (2026). *Cultivating Safety in Agriculture for Persons with Disability*. Ability Agriculture, CQUniversity. National Disability Research Partnership.

former prisoners, family members, community workers and frontline staff. Their input changed the direction of the work. An account of a person denied family visits on remand led the team to check whether visitation restrictions were a local or a systemic problem, and to redirect the literature review. Co-design also shifted the project's purpose. A message recurred through the sessions, that the gap is action rather than research. This moved the project toward accessible, advocacy-ready findings, and toward a future study that works with people in custody directly.⁶

Across the 2025 Seed Funding projects, co-design changed both what was researched and how research problems were understood. One of the clearest examples of this was how projects understood safety.

Defining safety

“

We changed the way we spoke and asked questions about both safety and disability...

Building culturally safe support for refugee communities

Every 2025 Seed Funding project focused on safety. One of the first tasks of co-design was to define what safety meant. Projects found that different communities understood safety in different ways. These definitions shaped the research questions and methods that followed.

The *Building culturally safe support for refugee communities* project, led by Deakin University, broadened the team's understanding of safety beyond physical harm. They shared “For example, one person in our Advisory Group asked ‘What do you mean by safety? Here in Bendigo, there are no bombs falling on us’. This prompted a discussion about different forms of safety including emotional and social as well as physical safety.”⁷

The *Psychological safety for children with 'behaviours of concern'* project, led by the University of Melbourne, moved children's behaviour as the problem, instead understanding behaviour psychological safety as something created or undermined by

away from treating as communication and environments and systems. They shared: “Lived Experience Investigators helped the team move away

from deficit-based explanations of ‘behaviour’ and towards a rights-based understanding that behaviour is communication and that psychological safety is created (or harmed) by environments, relationships and systems.”⁸

The umbrella review project *Autistic people's safety across life stages and contexts*, led by The University of Western Australia, drew on lived experiences of Autistic team members and advisors, psychological and occupational safety research and disability research. The team did not only think of safety as being

⁶ Daniels-Mayes, S., Kerr, S., & Sackley, R. (2026). *Barriers Within Bars: Final Report*. AccessAble Braille Enterprises, University of Melbourne. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁷ Dew, A., Robinson, K., Brown, A., Graves, K., Tarquinio, S., Taveesupmai, N., Azimi, Z., Flynn, S., Davis, T., & Shearson, A. (2026). *Co-designing research to build regional capacity for culturally safe access to supports and services for people with disability from refugee communities*. Deakin University, Bendigo Community Health Service, Lifely, Amicus Community Services, Intereach. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁸ Knight, S., Merrick, N., Imms, C., Harrison, M., McKay-Brown, L., Aquilina, C., Renton, H., Mulholland, J., Lancaster, C., Heine, K., Staheli, N., & Koullas, K. (2026). *Psychological safety of children with disability labelled with 'behaviours of concern'*. National Disability Research Partnership.

protected from harm, risk or danger. Autistic people can feel and be safe when they have choice, opportunities, positive wellbeing, and when they can develop and use their strengths and participate in their communities.

Several projects also challenged assumptions about the relationship between safety and autonomy. The *Sometimes I'm too safe project*, led by the University of Queensland, explored dignity of risk with adults with intellectual disability, highlighting that protecting people from risk can also restrict autonomy.⁹ The *Safe-MEALS* project similarly examined the tension between duty of care and dignity of risk, noting that restrictive approaches to eating may reduce quality of life.¹⁰ These projects considered how people could be supported to make informed choices in the context of safety.

Projects also demonstrated that safety is shaped by the interaction of disability with other aspects of people's lives. The *Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care* project found that older culturally and linguistically diverse women with disability often prioritised the wellbeing of their families over asserting their own rights, meaning conventional approaches to safety did not always reflect their experiences.¹¹ The *Barriers Within Bars* synthesis, led by the University of Melbourne, showed that intersectionality creates forms of disadvantage that are rarely visible within either justice or disability research.¹²

Had projects begun with a fixed definition of safety, many of these insights would not have shaped the research. Early co-design changed one of the central concepts on which the research was built.

⁹ Faragher, R. M., Lloyd, J., Nankervis, K., Faragher, R., & Toohey, M. (2026). *Sometimes I'm Too Safe. Exploring the dignity of risk with adults with intellectual disability*. The University of Queensland, in partnership with Down Syndrome Australia and Down Syndrome & Intellectual Disability Queensland. National Disability Research Partnership.

¹⁰ Hemsley, B., Given, F., Debono, D., O'Connor, J., Jurgens, A., Baldac, S., & Chan, J. (2026). *Safe-MEALS: Safe Food, Enjoyable Meals, Advocacy and Lived Experiences*. The University of Technology Sydney, Melba Support Services, Onemda, Speech Pathology Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

¹¹ Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026) *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

¹² Daniels-Mayes, S., Kerr, S., & Sackley, R. (2026). *Barriers Within Bars: Final Report*. AccessAble Braille Enterprises, University of Melbourne. National Disability Research Partnership.

Strengthening capacity

“

Being part of this research team is the first time I've felt like I had a voice, am respected and valued for my lived experience and knowledge.

Psychological safety for children

the
as possible.¹³

The co-design process in 2025 Seed Funding strengthened capability across the teams and supported genuine partnerships.

People with disability took on substantive research roles as co-researchers and co-authors. They contributed to analysing findings, developing research tools and shaping research questions. For many, this was their first opportunity to contribute as a researcher rather than a research participant. These experiences supported people with disability to build new skills and confidence to participate in future research opportunities that may arise.

In the *Sometimes I'm too safe* project, led by the University of Queensland, four research assistants with Down syndrome were employed and trained to conduct interviews, develop questions and contribute to analysis. One co-researcher described moving from being interviewed in earlier research to conducting the interviews himself. The team noted that experience opened up what participants and their families saw

Researchers also described changes to their own practice. In the *Feeling Safe in Your Own Skin* project, the team found that co-design supported skill development for both researchers and people with disability. People with lived experience developed skills and experience as research leaders, while the clinicians and researchers on the team developed stronger skills in listening, reflection and sharing power¹⁴.

The projects also built partnerships that are continuing beyond the grant. The *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness* project brought together people with disability and research organisations that had not worked together before, and the team agreed to continue as a group into the next stage.¹⁵ The *Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care* project brought together an ageing organisation with a disability advocacy organisation, two sectors that rarely collaborate, and each reported that working together changed assumptions it had held.¹⁶ Other projects brought new partners

¹³ Faragher, R. M., Lloyd, J., Nankervis, K., Faragher, R., & Toohey, M. (2026). *Sometimes I'm Too Safe. Exploring the dignity of risk with adults with intellectual disability*. The University of Queensland, in partnership with Down Syndrome Australia and Down Syndrome & Intellectual Disability Queensland. National Disability Research Partnership.

¹⁴ McDonald, R., Rixon, C., Smith, M., Bowditch, C., Feldner, H., Lambert, E., Phillips, H., McCormick, J., Paay, J., Vincs, K., Triantis, P., Taffe, S., Kramer, S. & Bridge, C. (2026). *Safe in my own skin*. MedTechVic Hub, Swinburne University of Technology.

¹⁵ Prain, M., Silveira, S., Tait, K., Lawson, H., Hallinan, S., Carter, M., & Chen, L. (2026). *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness*. Able Australia; NextSense; Macquarie University; Deafblind Victoria; Hunter Deafblind Connect; Deafblind West Australians. National Disability Research Partnership.

¹⁶ Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026) *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

on board during the work. Several teams noted that these relationships provide a foundation for the next stage of research, rather than having to build new partnerships from scratch.

The projects also produced practical outputs beyond research proposals, including podcasts, knowledge syntheses, accessible resources and advice for government. These resources will continue to support disability research and practice beyond the life of the grants.

What enabled good co-design

Across the 2025 Seed Funding projects, there were a number of themes that emerged on factors that supported meaningful co-design. These included disability leadership, trust, accessibility, adequate time, shared decision-making and dedicated investment. While these themes were consistent, they looked different across communities. Teams adapted their approaches to reflect different communication preferences, cultural contexts, lived experiences and participation needs. Together, the projects show what meaningful co-design requires in different communities.

Table 4 Factors for meaningful co-design

Factors	What 2025 Seed Funding showed
Disability leadership	People with disability shaped research priorities, methods and decisions.
Trust	Trust must be built before meaningful co-design can occur.
Accessibility	Accessibility supports need to be tailored to the need of the community.
Time	Time is a requirement for co-design and for some communities or cohorts additional time is required.
Context	There can be barriers to participating in co-design or research because of different settings or systems.
Sharing power	Consultation is not enough. People with disability must have leadership roles and decision-making power.
Cultural safety	Communities should shape how co-design is undertaken.
Psychosocial safety	Safe participation requires deliberate planning and ongoing support.
Investment	Co-design requires dedicated investment.

Disability Leadership

“

It's important for people with intellectual disability to be involved in research because lived experience matters, and it shows that people with disability can make valuable contributions to research...

SAFE Homes

Research Associate. She questions and key

also hosted.¹⁸ Similarly, *Sometimes I'm too safe* employed co-researchers with intellectual disability as core members of the research team.¹⁹

The projects also recognised that no individual can represent the experiences of an entire community. Several teams reflected on whose voices had been included and whose were still missing. Some deliberately limited the scope of their findings to reflect the communities who had participated, while others identified groups whose experiences would require future research led by people with those lived experiences.

People with disability led the co-design process in different ways across the 2025 Seed Funding projects. The approaches to leadership reflected the communities involved, the purpose of the research and the expertise people brought to the project.

Across all projects, people with disability influenced what should be researched, how the research would be undertaken, and how decisions were made. For example, the *Reproductive justice and neurodivergence* project, led by the University of Melbourne, was directed by a neurodivergent-led Community Reference Group. The group guided the project's focus, methods and language, identified safer sexual and reproductive healthcare as the priority, and co-designed how meetings and decisions would work. The team noted that this ensured the project's direction reflected community expertise rather than being determined by people outside the community.¹⁷

Other projects demonstrated leadership through research roles. For example, the *Safe-MEALS* project employed a researcher with swallowing and communication disability as a

led the review of coroners' reports and developed the topics, messages for a three-part podcast series on mealtime safety, which she

¹⁷ Moulton, J., O'Donovan, A., Pike, A., Arnstein-Kerslake, A., Merner, B., Haining, C., Kirby, C., Toulmin, C., Sutherland, G., La Paglia, H., Hargrave, J., Miles, J., Whelan, K., Noble, K., Witteveen, K., Steele, L., Keogh, L., Prior, M., Viktor, O., Grove, R., Spencer, R., Power, R., Timperley, S., Odoi, S., Dimov, S., & Moodie, T. (2026). *Reproductive justice and neurodivergence: A participatory approach to addressing structural inequity*. University of Melbourne; Sexual Health Quarters; Sexual Health Victoria; University of Technology Sydney; University of Queensland; National Disability Research Partnership.

¹⁸ Hemsley, B., Given, F., Debono, D., O'Connor, J., Jurgens, A., Baldac, S., & Chan, J. (2026). *Safe-MEALS: Safe Food, Enjoyable Meals, Advocacy and Lived Experiences*. The University of Technology Sydney, Melba Support Services, Onemda, Speech Pathology Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

¹⁹ Faragher, R. M., Lloyd, J., Nankervis, K., Faragher, R., & Toohey, M. (2026). *Sometimes I'm Too Safe. Exploring the dignity of risk with adults with intellectual disability*. The University of Queensland, in partnership with Down Syndrome Australia and Down Syndrome & Intellectual Disability Queensland. National Disability Research Partnership.

Building trust

“

Co-designing research, particularly on sensitive and complex topics, takes time, trust, resources and really good partnerships with diverse stakeholders...

Hidden in Plain Sight

The Australian system and its sector expertise at the intersection of disability and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Working together challenged assumptions on both sides and produced a proposal neither organisation would have designed alone.²¹

Association of Gerontology contributed knowledge of the aged care relationships, while the National Ethnic Disability Alliance brought

Building trust was fundamental to meaningful co-design, but the way trust was established differed across communities. Some teams built on long-standing partnerships with trusted organisations, while others invested time in developing new relationships. Trust was developed through working together, sharing decisions and demonstrating that people's knowledge would shape the research.

Several projects built on established relationships that provided a strong foundation for co-design. *Safe Homes*, led by the University of Melbourne with Inclusion Australia, drew on an existing partnership in which the research topic reflected Inclusion Australia's advocacy priorities. This ensured the research addressed issues already identified by the community and enabled the team to provide feedback to government while the project was underway.²⁰

The *Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care* project similarly brought together complementary expertise.

Existing relationships were particularly important when projects worked with communities that had experienced exclusion or where research addressed sensitive issues. *Hidden in Plain Sight*, led by Deaf Indigenous Community Consultancy, worked with First Nations women with disability and their kinship carers on continence and safety. The team reported that both the process and the outcomes were dependent on the existing trusted relationships.²²

Other projects demonstrated that trust can also be deliberately built. *Safe-MEALS* combined online meetings with a two-day interstate visit to partner disability services. The team described the visit as an

²⁰ Bright, T., White, B., Nelson, L., Canham, B., McLean, D., Conley Wright, A., Mason, K., Aitken, Z., Dimov, S., Dickinson, H., & Kavanagh, A. (2026). *Safe Homes: Co-designing evidence for inclusive, individualised support for people with intellectual disability in Australia*. University of Melbourne, Inclusion Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

²¹ Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026) *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

²² Barney, J., Devine, A., Huska, M., Blinman, S., & Solomon, L. S. L. (2026). *Hidden in plain sight: Culturally responsive continence care for First Nations women with disability. Final Report*. Deaf Indigenous Community Consultancy, The University of Melbourne, Continence Nurses Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

important way of showing respect to people who are not traditionally included in university research and creating opportunities to build relationships beyond formal meetings.²³

Several projects found that participants were initially cautious about taking part. Many had previous experiences of inaccessible research or consultation that had not led to change. Trust developed because people could see that their ideas influenced the direction of the research and the decisions that were made. Seeing their lived experience reflected in the project demonstrated that their knowledge was valued and that their contribution mattered.

Across the 2025 Seed Funding projects, trusted relationships enabled honest conversations, supported shared decision-making and strengthened the quality of the research. 2025 Seed Funding provided the time needed to establish and strengthen these relationships before research began. Without that investment, partnerships would have been more transactional and there would have been fewer opportunities to develop the trust needed for meaningful co-design.

Accessibility

“

Some of the professional language and jargon used in the project was difficult at first, but the team collaborated well and made sure there was time to stop, explain things, and support understanding...

SAFE Homes

Accessibility was fundamental to meaningful participation. Teams designed their approaches to accessibility around the communication preferences, and participation needs of the communities they were working with. Planning for accessibility from the start enabled people with disability to participate on an equal basis and helped ensure that co-design reflected the experiences and expertise of those communities.

Accessibility looked different across communities. The *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness* project required specialist Auslan interpreters skilled in deafblind communication, including tactile translation, together with long lead times so information could be prepared in accessible formats before people decided whether to participate.²⁴ Similarly, for people with intellectual disability the team needed to factor in plain language and Easy Read not only for participant information but also for governance documents that supported participation in decision making.²⁵

The *Reproductive justice* through flexibility,

and *neurodivergence* project focused on meeting accessibility needs offering multiple ways for people to participate with no expectation that

²³ Hemsley, B., Given, F., Debono, D., O'Connor, J., Jurgens, A., Baldac, S., & Chan, J. (2026). *Safe-MEALS: Safe Food, Enjoyable Meals, Advocacy and Lived Experiences*. The University of Technology Sydney, Melba Support Services, Onemda, Speech Pathology Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

²⁴ Prain, M., Silveira, S., Tait, K., Lawson, H., Hallinan, S., Carter, M., & Chen, L. (2026). *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness*. Able Australia; NextSense; Macquarie University; Deafblind Victoria; Hunter Deafblind Connect; Deafblind West Australians. National Disability Research Partnership.

²⁵ Faragher, R. M., Lloyd, J., Nankervis, K., Faragher, R., & Toohey, M. (2026). *Sometimes I'm Too Safe. Exploring the dignity of risk with adults with intellectual disability*. The University of Queensland, in partnership with Down Syndrome Australia and Down Syndrome & Intellectual Disability Queensland. National Disability Research Partnership.

everyone would communicate in the same way. Projects working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities combined translated resources, interpreters, plain English explanations and follow-up phone calls to support participation.²⁶ Similarly, the *Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care* project combined online and telephone discussions, meeting summaries and follow-up phone calls to accommodate different communication preferences and changing circumstances. Accessibility also meant remaining flexible throughout the project, recognising that people's needs and preferred ways of participating could change over time.²⁷

The *Autistic people's safety review project* combined pre-booked large team meetings every 5-6 weeks with optional, smaller drop-in online sessions at key points of the research project to facilitate more direct sharing, discussions and reflections in smaller groups. The team combined these flexible options with email or written reviewing of material or data. Further, the team recorded the meetings with all members' permission and consent. All discussion recordings, transcripts and plain language short summaries were then uploaded in a shared Teams channel made for the project and all team members, who have access to the channel throughout the project.

All of the types of accessibility supports required dedicated investment. These requirements varied considerably between communities, reinforcing that accessibility cannot be treated as a standard package of adjustments but must be designed around the needs of participants.

Time

“

Time is not a luxury. It is what makes meaningful participation possible...
Safe in my own skin

Time was one of the most consistently identified conditions for meaningful co-design. Building relationships, providing accessibility, reaching shared decisions and refining research questions all took longer than conventional research planning often allows.

The *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness* project found that communication access for people who are deafblind required much longer lead times than conventional research planning allows.²⁸

Sometimes I'm too safe, working with co-researchers with intellectual disability found that developing interview questions took longer than expected. Questions were repeatedly reworded, trialled and revised, and even during piloting some were interpreted differently from what the team intended. The project concluded that this level of refinement is rarely possible within conventional research timeframes. Having

²⁶ Moulton, J., O'Donovan, A., Pike, A., Arnstein-Kerslake, A., Merner, B., Haining, C., Kirby, C., Toulmin, C., Sutherland, G., La Paglia, H., Hargrave, J., Miles, J., Whelan, K., Noble, K., Witteveen, K., Steele, L., Keogh, L., Prior, M., Viktor, O., Grove, R., Spencer, R., Power, R., Timperley, S., Odoi, S., Dimov, S., & Moodie, T. (2026). Reproductive justice and neurodivergence: A participatory approach to addressing structural inequity. University of Melbourne; Sexual Health Quarters; Sexual Health Victoria; University of Technology Sydney; University of Queensland; National Disability Research Partnership.

²⁷ Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026) *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

²⁸ Prain, M., Silveira, S., Tait, K., Lawson, H., Hallinan, S., Carter, M., & Chen, L. (2026). *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness*. Able Australia; NextSense; Macquarie University; Deafblind Victoria; Hunter Deafblind Connect; Deafblind West Australians. National Disability Research Partnership.

this additional time produced stronger research tools informed in the lived experience of the co-researchers.²⁹

Time also shaped participation in practical ways. People's availability varied according to work, caring responsibilities, and changing capacity. This meant that projects had to take very flexible approaches with scheduling project meetings including offering multiple sessions, recording meetings and providing other ways to participate. The *Reproductive justice and neurodivergence* project illustrates this challenge. Meeting times were initially chosen through a poll, but often fell in the evening and conflicted with parenting and caring responsibilities. For the next phase, the team planned a combination of daytime and evening meetings together with recordings or short summaries so members who missed a session could remain involved.³⁰

Many teams felt they needed more time than the grant allowed. Ethics approvals, governance processes and accessibility requirements also took considerably longer than many teams had anticipated. This had an impact on the scope of the work that could be completed. Funding models need to recognise the time required for accessibility, relationship building and shared decision-making.

Context

“

Barriers to research participation mirror the barriers Indigenous people with disability face inside the system.

Barriers within bars

In aged
when they were least

Meaningful participation also depended on factors outside the research team's control. People's ability to take part was shaped by the systems, services and life circumstances around them.

The *Barriers Within Bars* synthesis found that state ethics processes, departmental approvals and institutional policies prevented direct engagement with people in custody, despite approaching more than 120 organisations. In supported accommodation, participation depended on disability services that were already under pressure to provide day-to-day support, limiting the ability of staff to participate.

People's lives also shaped when and how they could engage. In aged care, people often entered the system during periods of crisis, when they were least able to absorb information about their rights.³¹ The *Cultivating Safety in*

²⁹ Faragher, R. M., Lloyd, J., Nankervis, K., Faragher, R., & Toohey, M. (2026). *Sometimes I'm Too Safe. Exploring the dignity of risk with adults with intellectual disability*. The University of Queensland, in partnership with Down Syndrome Australia and Down Syndrome & Intellectual Disability Queensland. National Disability Research Partnership.

³⁰ Moulton, J., O'Donovan, A., Pike, A., Arnstein-Kerslake, A., Merner, B., Haining, C., Kirby, C., Toulmin, C., Sutherland, G., La Paglia, H., Hargrave, J., Miles, J., Whelan, K., Noble, K., Witteveen, K., Steele, L., Keogh, L., Prior, M., Viktor, O., Grove, R., Spencer, R., Power, R., Timperley, S., Odoi, S., Dimov, S., & Moodie, T. (2026). *Reproductive justice and neurodivergence: A participatory approach to addressing structural inequity*. University of Melbourne; Sexual Health Quarters; Sexual Health Victoria; University of Technology Sydney; University of Queensland; National Disability Research Partnership.

³¹ Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026) *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

Agriculture for Persons with Disability project worked across regional and remote communities where limited services and harvest periods affected the availability of participants and stakeholders³².

Meaningful participation cannot be designed in isolation from the wider context in which people live. Effective co-design worked with these realities, adapting to people's circumstances.

Sharing power

“

People with lived experience shaped the direction, language and priorities of this project at every stage.

Psychological safety of children

Co-design in research requires a shift from the usual approach where experienced researchers hold the majority of power. Across the 2025 Seed Funding projects, teams found that clear governance supported clarity of roles and decision-making. The governance arrangements varied across projects, reflecting different communities and ways of working, but the underlying principle was consistent: people with disability needed genuine authority to influence decisions.

The *Safety Beyond Barriers* project separated advice from decision-making. An Advisory Group provided strategic guidance, while co-designers retained final decision-making authority. Advisory meetings were deliberately scheduled before co-design sessions so advice could be considered by co-designers, who then decided whether and how it would be

incorporated.³³

The *Sometimes I'm too safe* project developed a written Working Agreement with the whole team that set shared expectations for how people would work together. Daily check-in and check-out activities also helped monitor how people were feeling throughout the project.³⁴

The *Pleasure-centred sexual safety* project built shared authority into how decisions were made. Lived experience researchers were employed as paid members of the co-design team, and the team used structured decision-making tools so that agreement was reached collectively rather than by majority. One method, described by the team as "fist to five", asked each person to show how much they supported a decision on a scale from a closed fist to five fingers, and the team moved forward only when everyone showed at least three. The team used this to decide the research aims, questions and design, so that lived experience shaped project direction.³⁵

³² Clarke, J., Colusso, P., Corish, N., & McDonald, N. (2026). *Cultivating Safety in Agriculture for Persons with Disability*. Ability Agriculture, CQUniversity. National Disability Research Partnership.

³³ Hudson, L., & Altman, T. (2026). *Safety Beyond Barriers: Diverse Family Perspectives on Violence and Disability*. Children and Young People with Disability Australia; Australian Institute of Family Studies. National Disability Research Partnership.

³⁴ Faragher, R. M., Lloyd, J., Nankervis, K., Faragher, R., & Toohey, M. (2026). *Sometimes I'm Too Safe. Exploring the dignity of risk with adults with intellectual disability*. The University of Queensland, in partnership with Down Syndrome Australia and Down Syndrome & Intellectual Disability Queensland. National Disability Research Partnership.

³⁵ Hindes, S., Moor, L., Molnar, L., Jolley, M., Amos, N., Bourne, A., Brown, J., Burgess, L., den Houting, J., Evans, B., Ison, J., Jago, E., Simmons, Z., & Vrankovich, S. (2026). *Developing strengths-based and pleasure-centred understandings of sexual safety for neurodivergent women, trans and gender-diverse people in Victoria*. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University; Women with Disabilities Victoria; Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, La Trobe University; La Trobe's Reducing Gender-Based Violence Research Group. National Disability Research Partnership.

Projects also found that role clarity was essential for shared decision-making. Where co-designers also worked as co-researchers, responsibilities could become blurred, particularly when individuals moved between facilitating discussions and contributing their own perspectives. Teams found it helpful to establish roles and expectations early, while recognising that some responsibilities continued to evolve as projects developed.

2025 Seed Funding showed that sharing power relies on clear governance, agreed roles and transparent decision-making processes.

Cultural safety

“

The team continued to meet to reflect on cultural safety... and discuss how to ensure the ways we worked together were culturally safe and enabled discussions about a topic that can be difficult to talk about.

Hidden in plain sight

Cultural safety was fundamental to meaningful participation for projects working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and refugee communities. These projects demonstrated that meaningful co-design cannot be separated from cultural context. Building trust meant recognising different understandings of safety, respecting community authority and allowing communities to shape how co-design was undertaken. Projects worked with trusted community organisations and created opportunities for communities to influence how participation occurred.

The *Building culturally safe support for refugee communities* conducted co-design across Dari, Karen and English. Bi-cultural workers employed by the partner health service interpreted, translated written materials, conducted interviews in community languages and co-led the Advisory Group. Working across three languages at once proved challenging. The project team concluded that adapting the design to separate language groups would better support meaningful participation.³⁶

continence care and held decision-making senior female Elders,

Hidden in Plain Sight, led by Deaf Indigenous Community Consultancy, worked with First Nations women with disability on safety. The project was led by its First Nations team members, who authority. Before the project began, the team sought permission from following cultural protocols for engaging women in the community. The

team developed its own Ways of Working, built around six elements of cultural safety: respect, listen, environment, connection, shared understanding and belonging. The team reported that the work was possible only because of the existing and trusted relationships held by the Project Lead and First Nations

³⁶ Dew, A., Robinson, K., Brown, A., Graves, K., Tarquinio, S., Taveesupmai, N., Azimi, Z., Flynn, S., Davis, T., & Shearson, A. (2026). *Co-designing research to build regional capacity for culturally safe access to supports and services for people with disability from refugee communities*. Deakin University, Bendigo Community Health Service, Lifely, Amicus Community Services, Intereach. National Disability Research Partnership.

members of the team, and that cultural protocol meant sensitive discussions with community members did not involve non-Indigenous team members.³⁷

Across these projects, culturally grounded practice strengthened both participation and the quality of the research. Working in partnership with communities challenged assumptions, broadened researchers' understanding of key concepts and ensured that research questions and methods reflected the experiences and priorities of the people the research was intended to benefit.

Psychosocial safety



Meaningful inclusion required creating psychologically safe spaces where participants could speak honestly about uncertainty, fear, or lack of confidence without judgement.

Cultivating Safety in Agriculture for Persons with Disability

participation helped traumatic experiences. deaths of people with debriefing conversations into the project and used active listening and regular breaks to help

Psychosocial safety was essential to participation. Teams created environments where participants, co-researchers and staff could take part safely, and gave this ongoing attention throughout the project. The specific risks varied, but every team worked to ensure people kept control over what they shared and how they took part.

Projects recognised that participation itself could create risks. Taking part in co-design can reveal the very experiences that make someone eligible to participate, and those risks often increase as a project becomes more visible. The *Safety Beyond Barriers* project developed eligibility criteria that allowed people to participate without identifying which aspects of their experience applied to them. Even with these safeguards, the team found that identifying someone as a co-designer could unintentionally reveal personal experiences. They described this as "*disclosure by association*" and concluded that decisions about disclosure are complex and need ongoing support and consideration during the project implementation.³⁸

Projects also planned practical strategies to support wellbeing throughout the co-design process. Trauma informed approaches, debriefing opportunities, and flexible teams respond appropriately when discussions involved difficult or The *Safe-MEALS* project reviewed coronial reports relating to the disability who had choked on food. The team incorporated structured debriefing conversations into the project and used active listening and regular breaks to help

³⁷ Barney, J., Devine, A., Huska, M., Blinman, S., & Solomon, L. S. L. (2026). *Hidden in plain sight: Culturally responsive continence care for First Nations women with disability. Final Report.* Deaf Indigenous Community Consultancy, The University of Melbourne, Continence Nurses Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

³⁸ Hudson, L., & Altman, T. (2026). *Safety Beyond Barriers: Diverse Family Perspectives on Violence and Disability.* Children and Young People with Disability Australia; Australian Institute of Family Studies. National Disability Research Partnership.

participants and researchers manage the emotional impact of discussing these experiences.³⁹ The *Safe Homes* project co-designed a distress protocol to support both interviewers and participants.⁴⁰

Psychosocial safety was an ongoing consideration throughout the projects. Trauma informed approaches supported researchers and lived experience staff as well as participants.

Investment

“

The NDRP grant enabled the space and time to conduct genuine co-design.

Safety Beyond Barriers: Diverse Family Perspectives on Violence and Disability

Meaningful co-design requires deliberate investment.

Traditional research funding rounds do not invest in this early stage of co-designing research design. Projects also highlighted that accessibility and partnership costs are often overlooked in traditional research funding.

The *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness* project highlighted the importance of funding for communication access. Communication access for people who are deafblind means specialist interpreters, tactile translation and information prepared well in advance. The team recommended that future funding provide a separate allocation for communication access, over and above the research funding, and allow enough time for accessible participation. Without this, the team argued, involving deafblind people in co-design of research is not realistic.⁴¹

The *Pleasure-centred sexual safety* project, led by La Trobe University, reported that employing lived experience researchers as core members of the research team and paying them fairly would not have been possible without dedicated co-design funding. The funding also created the time needed to build partnerships and undertake meaningful co-design before the research commenced.⁴²

2025 Seed Funding demonstrated that meaningful co-design cannot be achieved without investment. It requires research to be designed differently from the outset. Dedicated investment made it possible for

³⁹ Hemsley, B., Given, F., Debono, D., O'Connor, J., Jurgens, A., Baldac, S., & Chan, J. (2026). *Safe-MEALS: Safe Food, Enjoyable Meals, Advocacy and Lived Experiences*. The University of Technology Sydney, Melba Support Services, Onemda, Speech Pathology Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁴⁰ Bright, T., White, B., Nelson, L., Canham, B., McLean, D., Conley Wright, A., Mason, K., Aitken, Z., Dimov, S., Dickinson, H., & Kavanagh, A. (2026). *Safe Homes: Co-designing evidence for inclusive, individualised support for people with intellectual disability in Australia*. University of Melbourne, Inclusion Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁴¹ Prain, M., Silveira, S., Tait, K., Lawson, H., Hallinan, S., Carter, M., & Chen, L. (2026). *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness*. Able Australia; NextSense; Macquarie University; Deafblind Victoria; Hunter Deafblind Connect; Deafblind West Australians. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁴² Hindes, S., Moor, L., Molnar, L., Jolley, M., Amos, N., Bourne, A., Brown, J., Burgess, L., den Houting, J., Evans, B., Ison, J., Jago, E., Simmons, Z., & Vrankovich, S. (2026). *Developing strengths-based and pleasure-centred understandings of sexual safety for neurodivergent women, trans and gender-diverse people in Victoria*. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University; Women with Disabilities Victoria; Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, La Trobe University; La Trobe's Reducing Gender-Based Violence Research Group. National Disability Research Partnership.

projects to build accessibility, trust, shared decision-making and cultural safety into the design of the research.

What makes co-designed research harder

Lack of data and evidence

2025 Seed Funding revealed gaps in the evidence and in the systems that produce it. Some important questions had never been researched. Many of the systems that routinely collect information about people with disability were not built to answer the questions that matter most. In one field the evidence already existed but had not been acted on.

The synthesis project on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability in prison found only 18 studies examining the intersection of Indigeneity, disability and incarceration. There is no national dataset on disability prevalence among Indigenous prisoners, and little evidence on disability-specific deaths in custody, the effects of solitary confinement on people with cognitive disability, outcomes after release, or the experiences of interpreters, support workers and advocates working inside prisons. Where evidence does exist, it focuses on disabilities that are visible or easily measured and rarely accounts for the disabling effects of incarceration itself.⁴³

The umbrella review on Autistic people's safety did not find studies or reviews specifically exploring Autistic people's safety. Safety was not a distinct research topic in autism research, but there is a lot of research evidence scattered in different areas and using different terms reporting on factors and conditions compromising or enabling the wellbeing and safety of Autistic people.

Other projects identified similar gaps in their own fields. A search combining disability and farm safety returned no relevant Australian research over the previous decade. A project on alternatives to group homes identified an evidence gap on service-for-one models.⁴⁴ The *Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care* project found a lack of research, tools and accessible information about ageing, disability and cultural diversity.⁴⁵

Several projects found that data existed, but it was not collected in ways that supported learning or improvement. The aged care rights project examined the Aged Care National Minimum Data Set and found it does not capture the interaction between cultural and linguistic diversity and disability among people seeking care. Recent Aged care reforms still do not require reporting on cultural safety or on intersectional outcomes. The same project examined the wider safeguarding system and found the protections were uneven. Aged care providers must all be registered, so the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission can receive concerns and investigate providers it considers unsafe. Many providers operating under the NDIS are not registered and sit outside that oversight. For a person who moves between the two systems, the safeguards that apply depend on which system they are in.⁴⁶

⁴³ Daniels-Mayes, S., Kerr, S., & Sackley, R. (2026). *Barriers Within Bars: Final Report*. AccessAble Braille Enterprises, University of Melbourne. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁴⁴ Bright, T., White, B., Nelson, L., Canham, B., McLean, D., Conley Wright, A., Mason, K., Aitken, Z., Dimov, S., Dickinson, H., & Kavanagh, A. (2026). *Safe Homes: Co-designing evidence for inclusive, individualised support for people with intellectual disability in Australia*. University of Melbourne, Inclusion Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁴⁵ Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026) *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁴⁶ Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026) *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

The mealtime safety project identified a challenge of data that are being collected but in a way that made the information difficult to use. Disability service incident databases were difficult and time-consuming to analyse because of how they are structured and how incidents are recorded. Coroner reports on the deaths of people with disability also contained language reflecting negative assumptions about disability, including treating some choking deaths as not preventable. The team recommended that disability services maintain incident databases that include near misses, reportable to governing bodies, so that organisations can learn from incidents that could have resulted in serious harm.⁴⁷

In the *Barriers Within Bars* co-design sessions, participants returned repeatedly to the view that the gap is not knowledge but action. Major inquiries, including the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1991 and the Disability Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability in 2023, had already produced clear recommendations that were not acted on. As the team recorded it, "the problem is not a lack of research but a lack of implementation". The priority they identified was making existing evidence accessible to communities and to the people who set policy.⁴⁸

These findings show that there are systemic issues with how data and information is collected about disability and safety. In some areas, the evidence was missing. In others, evidence already existed but was not structured for learning or translated into action. Data about the safety of people with disability is generated every day through incident reports, coronial investigations and administrative collections. Unfortunately, much of this information is not collected or organised in ways that answer the questions that matter most to people with disability. It also often fails to capture the intersecting factors that shape people's experiences.

Systems

2025 Seed Funding projects identified a range of common challenges with the systems that shape disability research in Australia. These findings suggest that strengthening disability-led research will require changes not only to individual projects, but also to the approach to funding, employment, and the systems within which research takes place.

Several teams identified changes that would better support disability-led research.

Accessibility costs

Traditional research funding often does not cover the costs of the work that makes disability-led research possible. Communication access, relationship building, cultural protocols and governance are treated as extra costs rather than core parts of the work.

This affects projects differently. Teams working with communities that require higher levels of communication support or tailored engagement spend a greater proportion of their budget making participation possible. Without funding models that recognise these costs, research will continue to favour the communities that are easiest to reach.

Several projects suggested practical changes. The *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness* project recommended separate funding for communication access and longer timeframes

⁴⁷ Hemsley, B., Given, F., Debono, D., O'Connor, J., Jurgens, A., Baldac, S., & Chan, J. (2026). *Safe-MEALS: Safe Food, Enjoyable Meals, Advocacy and Lived Experiences*. The University of Technology Sydney, Melba Support Services, Onemda, Speech Pathology Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁴⁸ Daniels-Mayes, S., Kerr, S., & Sackley, R. (2026). *Barriers Within Bars: Final Report*. AccessAble Braille Enterprises, University of Melbourne. National Disability Research Partnership.

or fewer expected outputs.⁴⁹ *Safe Homes* recommended funding Easy Read from the beginning of projects rather than trying to find additional funding for these translations later.⁵⁰ The *Pleasure-centred sexual safety* project highlighted the need for funding that reflects the complexity of large multi-partner collaborations and greater transparency around in-kind contributions.⁵¹

Co-design starts too late

Most research funding programs offer no resources for early co-design. Researchers may consult with people with lived experience as they are developing research proposals, but have no time or resources to do more than consult. Co-design usually begins only after funding is awarded. By then the research questions, and sometimes the methods, have already been set.

This Round revealed that involving people with disability earlier changed both the questions and the way the research would be done. The aged care rights project substantially revised its original plans once people with lived experience were involved, and concluded that co-design should begin before a funding application is developed, not after.⁵² The psychological safety project reached the same conclusion. The team noted that grants usually require a fully developed proposal before funding is awarded, so co-design happens late. This funding instead "allowed us to build the team and relationships first, and to co-design a future research project led by people with disability from the start".⁵³

Expecting co-design to happen before funding is awarded asks organisations to invest time and resources without knowing whether the project will proceed. There is a need for additional investment to support this early co-design of research proposals.

Employment barriers

Several projects employed people with disability as researchers. In doing so, they found that university systems were often difficult to navigate.

University recruitment and onboarding processes frequently assumed levels of literacy, and administrative experience that created barriers for people with intellectual disability. Security

⁴⁹ Prain, M., Silveira, S., Tait, K., Lawson, H., Hallinan, S., Carter, M., & Chen, L. (2026). *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness*. Able Australia; NextSense; Macquarie University; Deafblind Victoria; Hunter Deafblind Connect; Deafblind West Australians. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁵⁰ Bright, T., White, B., Nelson, L., Canham, B., McLean, D., Conley Wright, A., Mason, K., Aitken, Z., Dimov, S., Dickinson, H., & Kavanagh, A. (2026). *Safe Homes: Co-designing evidence for inclusive, individualised support for people with intellectual disability in Australia*. University of Melbourne, Inclusion Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁵¹ Hindes, S., Moor, L., Molnar, L., Jolley, M., Amos, N., Bourne, A., Brown, J., Burgess, L., den Houting, J., Evans, B., Ison, J., Jago, E., Simmons, Z., & Vrankovich, S. (2026). *Developing strengths-based and pleasure-centred understandings of sexual safety for neurodivergent women, trans and gender-diverse people in Victoria*. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University; Women with Disabilities Victoria; Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, La Trobe University; La Trobe's Reducing Gender-Based Violence Research Group. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁵² Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026) *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁵³ Knight, S., Merrick, N., Imms, C., Harrison, M., McKay-Brown, L., Aquilina, C., Renton, H., Mulholland, J., Lancaster, C., Heine, K., Staheli, N., & Koullas, K. (2026). *Psychological safety of children with disability labelled with 'behaviours of concern'*. National Disability Research Partnership.

requirements such as multi-factor authentication added further complexity.⁵⁴ One project concluded that employing people with intellectual disability within its partner organisations was not feasible under existing systems.

Some barriers begin well before employment. The deafblind project highlighted longstanding barriers to education, employment and access to assistive technology, resulting in a very small pool of deafblind people with opportunities to be involved in research.⁵⁵

Some projects also demonstrated that change is possible. After identifying barriers to employing researchers with intellectual disability, one university began reviewing its recruitment processes, including considering the use of plain language contracts.

⁵⁴ Faragher, R. M., Lloyd, J., Nankervis, K., Faragher, R., & Toohey, M. (2026). *Sometimes I'm Too Safe. Exploring the dignity of risk with adults with intellectual disability*. The University of Queensland, in partnership with Down Syndrome Australia and Down Syndrome & Intellectual Disability Queensland. National Disability Research Partnership.

⁵⁵ Prain, M., Silveira, S., Tait, K., Lawson, H., Hallinan, S., Carter, M., & Chen, L. (2026). *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness*. Able Australia; NextSense; Macquarie University; Deafblind Victoria; Hunter Deafblind Connect; Deafblind West Australians. National Disability Research Partnership.

Conclusion

2025 Seed Funding demonstrated what is possible when people with disability have the opportunity to shape research before research questions and methods have been decided. Across fifteen projects, people with disability, researchers and partner organisations worked together to design research questions and research methods.

The projects showed that meaningful co-design depends on creating the conditions that support people with disability to participate as leaders and partners in the research process. Across different topics and communities, the same factors consistently supported meaningful involvement, although the way these were put into practice differed according to the community and research topic.

2025 Seed Funding also showed how disability research can be strengthened by investing in co-design before research begins. This investment changed the questions that were asked, the methods that were used and the research that may be undertaken. The projects also highlighted systemic barriers to disability-led research, including funding models, systems and employment practices.

The impact of 2025 Seed Funding extends beyond the research proposals that have been developed. For the thirteen co-design projects, the grants were designed to support the development of future research rather than generate new research findings. Equally important were the partnerships, capability and shared understanding that were developed through the co-design process. These outcomes strengthen the foundations for future disability-led research. Many of these projects are now moving into the next stage as research teams seek funding to undertake the work they have co-designed.

2025 Seed Funding also strengthened capability across the disability research system. People with disability gained experience as researchers, researchers developed new approaches to working in partnership, and organisations formed new collaborations. The projects also produced practical resources including knowledge syntheses, podcasts, accessible tools and advice for government.

It is too early to assess the longer-term impact of the 2025 Seed Funding. While this report demonstrates important immediate outcomes, including stronger partnerships, increased capability and the development of future research proposals, many of the intended impacts will emerge over time. Future evaluation could examine whether the projects secure additional research funding, including through future NDRP funding rounds and other funding bodies, and the longer-term impact of the Seed Funding on partnerships, the capability and confidence of people with disability and researchers, and the extent to which the approaches developed through the Seed Funding influence future disability research and research practice.

The NDRP's investment in early co-design has demonstrated that investing in the foundations of disability-led research is valuable in its own right. By supporting people with disability and researchers to work together before research begins, the Seed Funding strengthened partnerships, built capability and laid the groundwork for future disability-led research. Continuing to invest in this early stage of the research process will help ensure future research reflects the priorities and experiences of people with disability.

Key findings from 2025 Seed Funding

1. Funding co-design before research begins changes the research.

Early co-design means that people with disability can have a say in how research is designed. This means that the research questions reflect what is important to the community. Across 2025 Seed Funding projects there were significant changes in how projects were designed and what the priorities were based on the involvement of people with disability.

2. Co-design depends on creating the right conditions.

Disability leadership, trust, accessibility, adequate time, shared decision-making and dedicated investment consistently supported meaningful co-design across diverse projects.

3. Co-design looks different in different communities.

There was no single model of successful co-design. Effective approaches reflected the strengths and contexts of different communities.

4. Research systems continue to create barriers to disability-led research.

The projects identified barriers across funding arrangements, institutional systems, ethics processes and employment that made participation more difficult. These challenges reflected broader features of the research system. Strengthening disability research requires investment in the systems that support research, as well as investment in individual research projects.

5. Investment in co-design builds capability across the research system.

2025 Seed Funding shows the impact that early investment can have on the skills and experiences of people with disability, researchers and the development of partnerships. This early investment will lead to lasting strengthening of the system.

Appendix 1: The 2025 Seed Funding projects at a glance

Stream 1: Co-design of research proposals

Sometimes I'm too safe: exploring the dignity of risk

Lead: Professor Rhonda Faragher, University of Queensland. Partners: Down Syndrome Australia, Down Syndrome Queensland. Community: Adults with intellectual disability.

This project examined when keeping someone safe starts to limit their chance to learn and grow. Co-researchers with intellectual disability were employed as core members of the research team to co-design a research study to help families, support workers and NDIS providers find the right balance between safety and independence.

Building culturally safe support for refugee communities

Lead: Professor Angela Dew, Deakin University. Partners: Bendigo Community Health Service, Amicus Community Services, Lifely, Intereach. Community: People with disability from Karen and Afghan Hazara refugee backgrounds.

This project worked in one regional Victorian town to co-design better support pathways to disability support for people from refugee backgrounds. The co-design group worked across three languages, Dari, Karen and English, with bi-cultural workers from the partner health service, whose existing connections to the Karen and Afghan Hazara communities were central to the work. Community artists developed artwork that represented the research findings.

Pleasure-centred sexual safety for neurodivergent people

Lead: Dr Sophie Hinds, La Trobe University. Partners: Women with Disabilities Victoria, Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, Reducing Gender-based Violence Network. Community: Neurodivergent women, trans and gender-diverse people.

This project moved beyond risk-focused approaches to ask what sexual safety and pleasure mean to neurodivergent women, trans and gender-diverse people. Lived-experience researchers were paid and held core team roles, with disability-led facilitation and decisions made by consensus rather than majority.

Keeping people with disability safe on farms

Lead: Ms Josie Clarke, Ability Agriculture Foundation. Partner: Central Queensland University Institute for Future Farming Systems. Community: People with disability working in agriculture.

This project examined how the agricultural safety system supports or fails to support safe work for people with disability. Rather than focusing on individual workers, it brought together people with lived experience, employers, farm safety professionals, allied health practitioners and agribusiness, and co-designed a Cultivating Safety ecosystem framework and map.

Psychological safety for children with 'behaviours of concern'

Lead: Dr Sarah Knight, University of Melbourne. Partners: Heads Together for Brain Injury, Yellow Ladybugs. Community: Children with disability and families.

This project addressed the psychological safety of children with disability described as having behaviours of concern, and the risks they face in school settings. This team focused on co-designing research to

help schools and services better understand and support these children, moving away from exclusion toward genuine inclusion.

Safe Homes: alternatives to group homes

Lead: Dr Tess Bright, University of Melbourne. Partner: Inclusion Australia. Community: People with intellectual disability and complex support needs.

This project asked whether individual support arrangements ('service for one'), where families directly employ support workers, are safer than group homes. The research topic came from Inclusion Australia's advocacy priorities. The project resulted in a co-designed research proposal to address this evidence gap. They also gave feedback to government on the support arrangements during the project.

Safety Beyond Barriers: Diverse Family Perspectives on Violence and Disability

Co-Lead: Dr Liz Hudson and Dr Tess Altman, Children and Young People with Disability Australia. Partner: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Community: Families of children with disability.

This project examined how families of children with disability experience family violence, and how disability intersects with culture, gender and geography. In addition to developing a co-designed research proposal, it also developed co-designed resources including a safe disclosure fact sheet and media safety guidelines to protect people with disability involved in co-design.

Feeling Safe in Your Own Skin

Lead: Professor Rachael McDonald, MedTechVic Hub, Swinburne University of Technology. Partner: Genyus Network. Community: People with lived experience of disability accessing health and rehabilitation services.

This disability-led project examined psychosocial safety in health and rehabilitation settings, including whether people feel respected, believed, and able to be themselves when accessing services. People with lived experience worked as co-researchers with genuine leadership and decision-making authority. The team co-designed a shared understanding of psychosocial safety, a disability-led learning system, creative and embodied research methods, and a future research proposal to develop and test a psychosocial safety framework, peer-support approach, and practical learning toolkit for healthcare professionals.

Culturally grounded safety for First Nations women with disability (Hidden in Plain Sight)

Lead: Ms Jody Barney, Deaf Indigenous Community Consultancy. Partners: University of Melbourne, Continence Nurses Australia. Community: First Nations women with disability.

This project examined continence, safety and access to services for First Nations women with disability. Embedding co-designed and culturally informed Ways of Working, the project created safe dialogue that helped women and families begin advocating for better support.

A rights-based exploration of safety in home aged care for older CALD women with disability

Lead organisation: Australian Association of Gerontology. Partner: National Ethnic Disability Alliance. Community: Older CALD women with disability using home aged care.

This project examined what safety in aged care meant for older women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds living with disability. Co-design shifted the project from review of formal policies to individuals' understanding of their own rights. The project produced a grey-literature review mapping rights and safeguarding gaps in the intersection between ageing, disability and cultural diversity.

Safe-MEALS: safe food, enjoyable meals, advocacy and lived experiences

Lead: Professor Bronwyn Hemsley, Fiona Given, Deborah Debono, University of Technology Sydney.

Partners: Onemda, Melba Support Services, Speech Pathology Australia, Jeff Chan. Community: People with disability and swallowing difficulty in supported accommodation.

This project examined mealtime safety for people with swallowing difficulty. Choking and aspiration pneumonia are among the most common causes of death for people with disability in supported accommodation. The team co-designed research tools, the ethics application, and new methods for examining incident reports and coroner findings. They also produced a three-part podcast series hosted by a researcher with disability and developed new tools for analysing safety incidents. Their award-winning poster of results was presented at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Munich on the 30th of July 2026.

Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness

Lead: Dr Meredith Prain, Able Australia. Partners: Macquarie University, NextSense. Community: People with deafblindness.

This project explored navigation, road crossing and mobility safety for people who are deafblind. They identified the priority research question of what Orientation and Mobility Specialists need to know to better work with deafblind people.

Reproductive justice and neurodivergence

Lead: Dr Jessica Moulton, University of Melbourne, with University of Technology Sydney and University of Queensland. Partners: Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, Sexual Health Quarters WA, Sexual Health Victoria. Community: Neurodivergent people accessing reproductive healthcare.

This project examined barriers to reproductive rights and safety for neurodivergent people. A neurodivergent-led Community Reference Group guided the focus, methods and language, and identified safer sexual and reproductive healthcare in primary care as the priority.

Stream 2: Knowledge synthesis

Barriers Within Bars: Indigenous people with disability in prison

Lead: Associate Professor Sheelagh Daniels-Mayes, University of Melbourne. Partner: AccessAble Braille Enterprises. Community: Indigenous people with disability in the justice system.

This knowledge synthesis brought together what is known about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability in Australian prisons. It found only 18 studies examining the intersection of Indigeneity, disability and incarceration, and identified areas with almost no data, including disability prevalence among Indigenous prisoners, for which there is no national dataset. Despite outreach to more than 120 organisations, ethics restrictions and institutional approvals prevented direct engagement with people in custody.

Autistic people's safety across life stages

Lead: Associate Professor Iliana Magiati, The University of Western Australia.

Partners: Reframing Autism, Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) Research Centre for Autism Practice, Empower Autism. Community: Autistic people across the lifespan.

This first of its kind umbrella review (a review of reviews) brings together research review level evidence to build a comprehensive picture of what shapes Autistic people's safety. A team of Autistic, neurodivergent and non-autistic researchers, professionals, and advocates worked together to develop a framework of Autistic people's safety and to search the review evidence to identify the factors that compromise and promote safety in Autistic people.

Appendix 2: 2025 Seed Funding project reports

Stream 1: Co-design of research proposals

Barney, J., Devine, A., Huska, M., Blinman, S., & Solomon, L. S. L. (2026). *Hidden in plain sight: Culturally responsive continence care for First Nations women with disability. Final Report*. Deaf Indigenous Community Consultancy, The University of Melbourne, Continence Nurses Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

Bright, T., White, B., Nelson, L., Canham, B., McLean, D., Conley Wright, A., Mason, K., Aitken, Z., Dimov, S., Dickinson, H., & Kavanagh, A. (2026). *Safe Homes: Co-designing evidence for inclusive, individualised support for people with intellectual disability in Australia*. University of Melbourne, Inclusion Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

Clarke, J., Colusso, P., Corish, N., & McDonald, N. (2026). *Cultivating Safety in Agriculture for Persons with Disability*. Ability Agriculture, CQUniversity. National Disability Research Partnership.

Dawson, R.; Dulal, S.; Finlay, E.; Kasidis, V.; Mills, A.; South, S.; Stanley, S.J. (2026). *A Rights-Based Exploration of 'Safety' in Home Aged Care for Older CALD Women with Disabilities*. Australian Association of Gerontology & the National Ethnic Disability Alliance. National Disability Research Partnership.

Dew, A., Robinson, K., Brown, A., Graves, K., Tarquinio, S., Taveesupmai, N., Azimi, Z., Flynn, S., Davis, T., & Shearson, A. (2026). *Co-designing research to build regional capacity for culturally safe access to supports and services for people with disability from refugee communities*. Deakin University, Bendigo Community Health Service, Lifely, Amicus Community Services, Intereach. National Disability Research Partnership.

Faragher, R. M., Lloyd, J., Nankervis, K., Faragher, R., & Toohey, M. (2026). *Sometimes I'm Too Safe. Exploring the dignity of risk with adults with intellectual disability*. The University of Queensland, in partnership with Down Syndrome Australia and Down Syndrome & Intellectual Disability Queensland. National Disability Research Partnership.

Hemsley, B., Given, F., Debono, D., O'Connor, J., Jurgens, A., Baldac, S., & Chan, J. (2026). *Safe-MEALS: Safe Food, Enjoyable Meals, Advocacy and Lived Experiences*. The University of Technology Sydney, Melba Support Services, Onemda, Speech Pathology Australia. National Disability Research Partnership.

Hindes, S., Moor, L., Molnar, L., Jolley, M., Amos, N., Bourne, A., Brown, J., Burgess, L., den Houting, J., Evans, B., Ison, J., Jago, E., Simmons, Z., & Vrankovich, S. (2026). *Developing strengths-based and pleasure-centred understandings of sexual safety for neurodivergent women, trans and gender-diverse people in Victoria*. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University; Women with Disabilities Victoria; Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, La Trobe University; La Trobe's Reducing Gender-Based Violence Research Group. National Disability Research Partnership.

Hudson, L., & Altman, T. (2026). *Safety Beyond Barriers: Diverse Family Perspectives on Violence and Disability*. Children and Young People with Disability Australia; Australian Institute of Family Studies. National Disability Research Partnership.

Knight, S., Merrick, N., Imms, C., Harrison, M., McKay-Brown, L., Aquilina, C., Renton, H., Mulholland, J., Lancaster, C., Heine, K., Staheli, N., & Koullas, K. (2026). *Psychological safety of children with disability labelled with 'behaviours of concern'*. National Disability Research Partnership.

McDonald, R., Rixon, C., Smith, M., Bowditch, C., Feldner, H., Lambert, E., Phillips, H., McCormick, J., Paay, J., Vincs, K., Triantis, P., Taffe, S., Kramer, S. & Bridge, C. (2026). *Safe in my own skin*. MedTechVic Hub, Swinburne University of Technology.

Moulton, J., O'Donovan, A., Pike, A., Arnstein-Kerslake, A., Merner, B., Haining, C., Kirby, C., Toulmin, C., Sutherland, G., La Paglia, H., Hargrave, J., Miles, J., Whelan, K., Noble, K., Witteveen, K., Steele, L., Keogh, L., Prior, M., Viktor, O., Grove, R., Spencer, R., Power, R., Timperley, S., Odoi, S., Dimov, S., & Moodie, T. (2026). *Reproductive justice and neurodivergence: A participatory approach to addressing structural inequity*. University of Melbourne; Sexual Health Quarters; Sexual Health Victoria; University of Technology Sydney; University of Queensland; National Disability Research Partnership.

Prain, M., Silveira, S., Tait, K., Lawson, H., Hallinan, S., Carter, M., & Chen, L. (2026). *Exploring the mobility safety concerns of Australians with deafblindness*. Able Australia; NextSense; Macquarie University; Deafblind Victoria; Hunter Deafblind Connect; Deafblind West Australians. National Disability Research Partnership.

Stream 2: Knowledge synthesis

Daniels-Mayes, S., Kerr, S., & Sackley, R. (2026). *Barriers Within Bars: Final Report*. AccessAble Braille Enterprises, University of Melbourne. National Disability Research Partnership.



National Disability
Research Partnership