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Individuals have different preferences when choosing their SDA.

For example, some may prefer a home shared with a small number of friends.

Others may prefer a private unit and garden with features for physical accessibility or a flat near to transport and the local fitness park.

This research explores how SDA might best meet the needs of people with significant and permanent disability.

This research identified:

- how SDA is being used across Australia
- what tools are available to support participants exploring SDA
- what design principles are important for individuals who require SDA.

Our approach

This project was undertaken and included three key parts:

1. A systematic review of peer-reviewed and unpublished research (between 2010 and March 2020);
2. A desktop audit of NDIA policies and SDA-relevant documents; and
3. A series of interviews and a short online survey with research and disability sector external stakeholders, with an interest in housing.

What we found

We identified 14 SDA related research publications.

As SDA is new and only recently introduced by the NDIS, few studies have explored SDA specifically.

Most publications included in this project were Australian, descriptive and focused on house design features.

Only three studies evaluated the outcomes of participants housing journeys. The focus of these studies were on people with high physical support needs.

Highlights from the evidence

- There is evidence that matching housing design with lifestyle preferences and disability requirements is important for people with disability.

- To improve outcomes for participants, there are many factors that are important ‘beyond the build’. These include the natural environment, urban and community design, and supports for social connection and community inclusion.

- There is some evidence that inappropriate housing models may lead to loneliness or social isolation.

- Home furnishing and technologies may improve a person’s independence and experience, but they need to be used appropriately.

- To date there is limited evidence on the benefits of SDA on participants outcomes compared to other housing models, including the cost benefits.

Next steps

The Agency is continuing to work with external researchers and providers to progress the housing research agenda.

Using this research we will continue to track research and evaluation activities in progress to ensure evidence base on effectiveness is updated.