



HOW TO BE INNOVATIVE

We need to move away from traditional models of delivery and encourage a passion for learning and, as Richard Branson describes it, thinking and operating “outside the box”.

Furthermore, we need a workforce that is highly adaptable and ready to embrace inevitable changes putting customers or clients at the forefront of their services and programs. It requires action and commitment at all levels of the organisation. Although there are ample conversations about person-centred approaches, a closer look at services in the disability sector still show very little change in the delivery of community and disability programs.

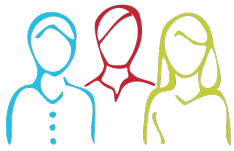
Examples of innovation within the Disability Sector, include the following:

Greystanes Disability Services: This longstanding collaboration has produced a range of assistive robotics prototypes for people with disabilities.

- **Northcott Innovations:** Projects include a step-climbing wheelchair attachment to help electric wheelchair users to traverse kerbs and single steps and the development of a design thinking process to reframe housing challenges faced by young people with disability.
- **Achieve Australia:** This partnership produced an evaluation of the impact of independent living on people with physical and intellectual disabilities.
- **National Disability Insurance Agency/Council for Intellectual Disability:** This collaboration produced an accessible information guide for people with intellectual disability in NSW and Victoria.
- **NSW Ministry of Health:** We partnered with the NSW Government to improve services and system responses for people with intellectual disabilities
- **National Disability Insurance Agency:** This project delivered design recommendations for an assistive technology hub in Australia.
- **St John of God Healthcare Richmond Hospital.** Produced in partnership with UTS’s interdisciplinary Graduate School of Health, this project examines the role of anger and perceived injustice in maintaining the symptoms of PTSD.

Although historically we have seen small pockets of innovation in some organisations within the disability sector, this has been more prominent since the introduction of the NDIS. The NDIS has been essentially used as tool to build the capacity of people with disabilities and their families to “think outside the square” and be innovative.

For example, instead of being Involved in Disability Employment Services, a number of people with disabilities have established their own businesses, including making dog



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biscuits, delivering fruit and vegetables, mowing lawns, gardening, selling homemade gifts in hospitals, selling greeting cards, home maintenance, etc. People with disabilities have shared their homes with international students, have volunteered to cook for elderly neighbours, or have written birthday cards out for a community centre, to be sent to their elderly clients.

Although NDIS Participants do have an obligation to think of what is “reasonable and necessary”, when it comes to capacity building under the NDIS model, as long as they work towards the goals stated in their NDIS plan, people with disabilities and their families can use their funding in very innovative ways.

For example, a person with disability can share their home with a person who stays in the house at night and helps with some household jobs. The person without disability may provide this help in return for free or reduced rent, or a person with high/complex care needs, may stay with another family once a month, to give their own family a break.

Someone who likes “waiting”, might establish a “professional waiting” service, where they wait at other people's homes for parcel deliveries, while they are at work, or a person might deliver groceries to elderly people who can't go shopping, or a mobile car wash service-going around washing people's cars at their homes. Along as the parameters of the NDIS are being met, the innovative ways in funding can be used are limitless!!

Entrepreneurship might seem an unlikely pursuit for Australians with disability. But greater focus on self-employment can transform disability into ability, boost income security and social inclusion, and increase labour market participation.

People with a disability are more likely to run a business than those without a disability, according to 2013 ABS data (11.6 per cent and 8.2 per cent respectively). US and European studies report similar findings. Clearly, stereotypes about the capacity of those with a disability to start and run a business are not backed by evidence.

Some with disabilities may be "pulled" into self-employment because it is their best chance for a job. They see self-employment as a way to overcome real or perceived job discrimination in some organisations.

Or they pursue self-employment to improve their independence and work/life balance, and increase their happiness and satisfaction – not unlike many without a disability who see the professional and personal benefits of entrepreneurship.

Sometimes people with disabilities and/or their families come up with ventures that other people wouldn't even think of!!!!!!!!!!!!!!