

**WHERE WILL WE LIVE? : RESIDENTIAL PREFERENCES FOR ADULTS  
WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The longevity of adults with intellectual disability is increasing and a number of these adults are outliving their parents. As a consequence new approaches are required to understand residential and locational preferences that may deliver independent living opportunities for these adults.*

*The limited literature regarding housing for the disabled in Queensland and the Sunshine Coast highlights the need for empirical research in this area. The proposed research agenda seeks to consult adults with intellectually disabilities on the Sunshine Coast. This will assist in determining their locational and living needs and allow for comparison against local and state government policy documents and world-wide trends in housing.*

*This paper discusses the review of the current literature to determine the gaps in research regarding residential preferences for adults with intellectual disability, with a focus on the Sunshine Coast. The review has assisted in exploring the requirements for adults with intellectual disability to achieve independent living. It has also captured a range of data across tenure type, flexible ownership, affordability, neighbourhood design, and opportunities relating to transport, social inclusion and employment. In conclusion this paper outlines an ongoing research agenda to explore the opportunities for independent living for adults with an intellectual disability on the Sunshine Coast.*

Keywords: *Intellectual disability, housing, independent living, planning*

## INTRODUCTION

On the Sunshine Coast adults with intellectual disabilities, their parents and housing providers are struggling to find housing solutions that will enable independent living opportunities for intellectually disabled adults who wish to, or need to, live away from the family home. Looking to the future this problem will be exacerbated in the knowledge that advances in medicine indicate that these adults will often outlive their parents and carers (Bibby 2013; Grey et al. 2015; Wiesel & Fincher 2009). Subsequently there is a need to determine working examples of housing delivery in Australia and globally that foster independent living opportunities for these adults. These individuals need to be empowered to be able to make decisions on their own, decisions the broader community often take for granted, such as the ability to shop for and prepare food they like rather than having to eat whatever is prepared for them (Lemon & Lemon 2003).

At present there is a lack of theoretically grounded information to guide planning schemes regarding the delivery of housing developments with appropriate targeted placements that foster independent living opportunities for adults with intellectual disability. Housing providers and financiers require empirical frameworks in order to develop new housing models/types to deliver housing outcomes for this client group.

This paper examines the current research regarding housing for adults with intellectual disabilities globally. It provides a review of published research, and has identified the gaps in evidence-based findings for housing options for adults with intellectual disability on the Sunshine Coast.

### Beyond Institutionalisation

Australia, Queensland and more specifically the Sunshine Coast have followed a worldwide movement started in the 1970s and 1980s of moving from a model of institutional living to group homes and sheltered

*Figure 1 Institutional Housing  
(hxpsychinst.wordpress.com 2015)*



*Figure 2 Group housing  
(emlakcoulisse.com 2015)*



*Figure 3 Dispersed Housing (Sydney Morning Herald 2015)*



workshops for adults with intellectual disability (Beadle-Brown, Mansell & Kozma 2007; Bigby 2004, 2008; Chenoweth 2000; Mansell & Beadle-Brown 2009a). Group homes are usually located in residential neighbourhoods and normally house five to twenty-five people in houses or low-rise buildings that blend into the urban residential landscape. Agencies provide staff to assist residents as required on a twenty-four hour basis (Lemon & Lemon 2003). Institutional, group and dispersed housing are represented here by images in **Figures 1, 2 and 3.**

Adequate housing and support for persons with a disability in 21st century Australia, might best be described by Bigby (2000) as including: 1) a house which is appropriate in its design, 2) affordable and where tenure is secure, and 3) access to required supported services (formal or informal). It is important that such services are available when needed, and provided in a way that meets the individual needs and circumstances of those with a disability.

Chenoweth (2000) believes that in Australia deinstitutionalisation can be considered a success, as the numbers of people with disabilities in large institutions is relatively small. In saying this, it appears that by 1999 the major forms of accommodation support for people with a primary intellectual disability or developmental delay were group homes (48.3%), institutions (30.0%) and where the research indicates this group of people would be best located, in outreach/drop-in, there is only 13.7% (Stancliffe 2002). Bridge et al. (2002a) claim that two-thirds of adults with disabilities reside in some form of

cared accommodation settings, which are primarily aged care nursing homes. This would indicate that adults with intellectual disability are either not being included in the decision making process or have little or no other option available to them. Furthermore, Australia’s system of housing adults with disabilities in group homes and institutions is unlikely to provide inclusion in or connectedness to the community (Amado 2014).

### Intellectual disability: Australia, Queensland and the Sunshine Coast

In 2015 approximately 4.2 million Australians have some form of physical or intellectual disability (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2015). The Queensland Government reports that in 2012 approximately 3% of the Australian population have an intellectual disability (Queensland Government 2015). The population of persons aged between 15 and 44 (age group definitions categorised by the ABS) living on the Sunshine Coast in 2012 was estimated at 124,725 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015). Based on this information the Sunshine Coast in 2015 is expected to be home to about 11,850 young adults with a disability, of which 3,745 have an intellectual disability. Many of these adults will live with their families.

Figure 4 demonstrates the numbers of Queenslanders by primary disability. This research includes adults aged between 18 and 40 years old who have intellectual disability, autism or acquired brain injury as the primary disability. This equates to approximately 57% of people with disabilities, and it is these people that will be the focus of this research.

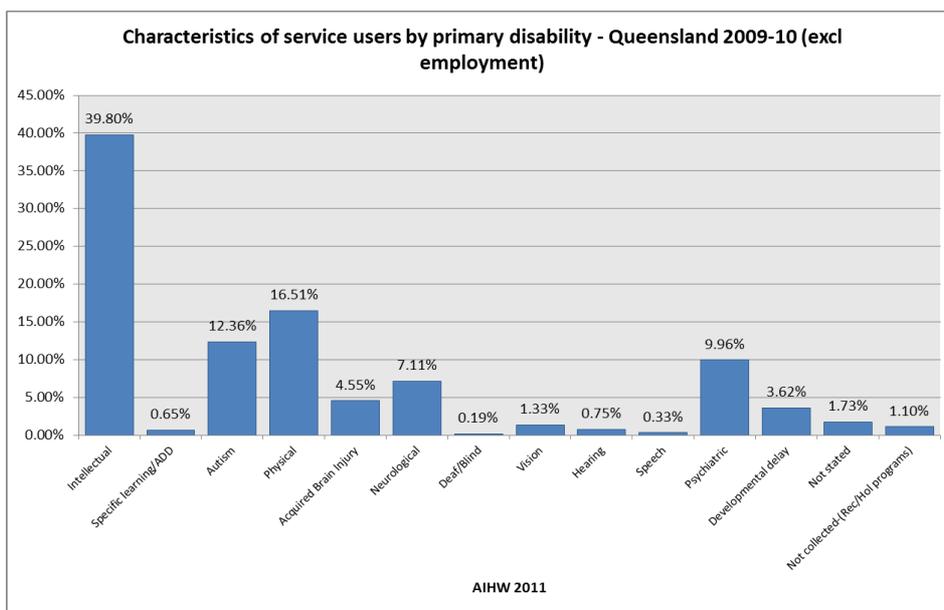
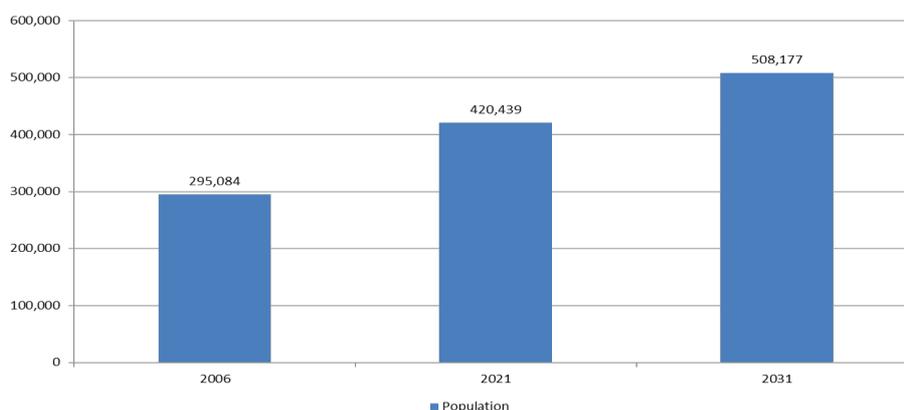


Figure 4 Compass Clients by Primary Disability

Figure 5 provides a graphical indication of future population estimations for the Sunshine Coast, and this extrapolates to approximately 15,250 people with an intellectual disability will reside on the Sunshine Coast in 2031. With continued improved medical intervention many adults with intellectual disability are likely to outlive their parents and carers, and will need specially located housing to allow them to live as independently as possible.



**Figure 5 Sunshine Coast Population Growth Predictions**

### **Housing needs of Adults with intellectual disability**

In Queensland, housing for people with disabilities comes under two discreet entities: Housing and Public Works Department and the Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services Department. Each department essentially works independently of each other. Each of these departments is governed by its own Legislation and associated regulations and policies: Housing Act 2003 and Disability Services Act 2006. This is further complicated at the national level where the two main housing and disability funding frameworks - the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA) and the Commonwealth-State Disability Agreement (CSDA) operate largely in isolation from each other (Bostock & Gleeson 2004). There is a need for Australia to adopt a more effective integrated approach in preparing housing policies and planning schemes which provide affordable housing for the general population as there is an estimated 700,000 to 1,000,000 households who currently reside in unaffordable housing (Beer, Kearins & Pieters 2007). If 3% of these households include a person with intellectual disability, then it can be assumed that between 21,000 and 30,000 intellectually disabled persons in 2007 were residing in unaffordable housing.

In April 2015 the housing needs of Australians with a disability was reported by Dunlevy (2015, p. 1) “....As their ageing parents pass away and as they become adults and want to leave the family home its estimated over 122,000 people with a disability will need housing in the next five years.” In the same article (Dunlevy 2015) used the following statement to highlight the needs of aging parents:

Judy from Tasmania says she and her husband are aged 60 and 71 and have been caring for their disabled daughter for 38 years but are always told there is no suitable supported accommodation for her. “we would like just a few years to enjoy our retirement time, is that too much to ask?” Dunlevy (2015, p. 1).

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that persons with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others, and not be obliged to live in a particular living arrangement (United Nations 2006). As such, Australian adults with intellectual disability and their carers are seeking housing provisions that are more aligned with the general population. They do not want to end up in aged care homes (Dunlevy 2015). In Canada, agencies have long offered apartment programs, where staff assist individuals with intellectual disabilities to find and acquire subsidised housing and part-time jobs to suit their needs, enabling them to live and work within the broader community (Lemon & Lemon 2003). This is one example of the type of accommodation service providers, housing agencies and parents and guardians are searching for on the Sunshine Coast (Dangerfield 2014).

An online search of disability service accommodation providers on the Sunshine Coast indicates that only the Endeavour Foundation and Foresters offer these services. Although a move from institutional to group housing is intimated through this information, many disabled adults do not want to share with others with a disability, in group housing (Dangerfield 2014). Whilst other housing providers are struggling with the type and placement of housing allowing for independent living opportunities for adults with disabilities, there is little information in the public arena to indicate what their intentions are into the future.

The anecdotal information, which was the catalyst for this research, indicates that other than some group housing, there appears to be no organisation (government, non-for-profit or commercial) on the Sunshine Coast that has independent living opportunities for adults with intellectual disability as their core business.

Family support and resources have been found to play significant roles in the transition to adulthood among youth with disabilities, with parental socioeconomic status and involvement affecting youths' occupational aspirations and employment outcomes (Leiter & Waugh 2009). Some Sunshine Coast parents and carers who are financially able are seeking housing solutions for the future for their intellectually disabled clients. However these tentative housing solutions appear ad-hoc and have not been explored systematically. Therefore the opportunities and constraints of the different approaches are not well considered or theoretically grounded. A key aim of this research is to address the paucity of knowledge in housing option availability for people with intellectual disability on the Sunshine Coast.

### **THREE IMPORTANT PERSPECTIVES FOR THIS HOUSING RESEARCH**

This research has peer reviewed academic papers to develop an understanding of the broad range of research in the area of disability housing types and the changes that have occurred worldwide over the last 50 years. Understanding the theory behind these changes is necessary to situate future research in this area. The theoretical framework for this review is organised around three main concepts considered integral to achieve independent living for adults with intellectual disability. These concepts are Power & Knowledge, Space/place and New Urbanism.

Power & Knowledge (Foucault 1982) refers to theory that implicates the importance of recognising the unique needs of individuals as minority groups. For this research there is a need to recognise, include and support knowledge so that informed decision-making can occur regarding the needs of adults with intellectual disabilities when determining their housing preferences and locations.

Power & Knowledge provides a theoretical basis on which we may build an argument for the ways in which we support and respect the decisions of adults with intellectual disability. The work of Foucault (1982) regarding power and knowledge, and more recently Shakespeare (1996); Stone and Colella (1996); and Gaventa and Cornwall (2008) underpins the need for the recognition of the rights and the treatment of persons with disability in the decision making process. There is a necessity to ensure the adult with intellectual disability has sufficient knowledge on which to make a decision, or simply describe 'a place' where they would like to live. They will also need to decide whether it will include sharing with others or living alone. This gives people with intellectual disability a voice and therefore enabling agency in the planning process (Shakespeare 1996). The benefits of this agency will not be limited to those with disability but many others who reside in and use the neighbourhood (Freund 2001).

Space/place (Halpenny 2010; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1991, 2005; Relph 1997; Seamon & Sowers 2008) highlights the importance of associated individual and collective meaning to space, and in particular the emotional attachment an individual has to a place.

Space and place attachment is important in attempting to understand the housing needs of the target group. The following cited by Seamon and Sowers (2008, p. 50) provides a summary of space and place theory:

...regardless of the historical time or the geographical, technological, and social situation, people will always need place because having and identifying with place are integral to what and who we are as human beings (Casey 1993; Malpas 1999).

It is suggested that place be considered in three components (1) the place's physical setting; (2) its activities, situations, and events; and (3) the individual and group meanings created through people's experiences and intentions in regard to that place (Relph 1997) as cited in Seamon and Sowers (2008, p. 45). The understanding and inclusion of each of three components will be critical in exploring the opportunities for independent living of adults with intellectual disability

The importance of place and locality should also be balanced with an awareness of, and connections to other places and global needs (Massey 1991). The understanding of the human significance of place in describing why a place is special and how this specialness impacts on the required change to a place to make it better is perhaps encapsulated in the neighbourhood design form represented by New Urbanism (Seamon & Sowers 2008) which is our third concept.

New Urbanism (Duany & Plater-Zyberk 1994; Van der Ryn & Calthorpe 2008) considers the importance of the design of mixed use compact neighbourhoods.

*New Urbanism* theorists claim that neighbourhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for pedestrian transit as well as the car; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions (Duany & Plater-Zyberk 1994; Van der Ryn & Calthorpe 2008). The concept of live, work and play in the same area espoused by New Urbanist theorists will be a platform on which to test the safe, affordable, accessible nature of dispersed housing that is emerging as appropriate for adults with intellectual disability. The treatment of people with disabilities and their involvement in the planning process links back to the need to understand the theory surrounding power and knowledge.

## METHOD

As part of the review of current research it is important to determine if any of these theoretical underpinnings could be identified. For example during the review of current published texts, the research methods were analysed to establish if aspects of power and knowledge had been considered. Evidence was sought of the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in the consultation phase of the decision-making process regarding housing placement preferences.

The reviewed articles were also examined for evidence of the recognition and inclusion of the three components of space and place (Relph 1997) and any subsequent connectedness of space and place as identified by Massey (1991).

The third criteria used in reviewing the research documents was any acknowledgement of the diversity and design features of communities considered appropriate for housing for adults with disabilities (Duany & Plater-Zyberk 1994; Van der Ryn & Calthorpe 2008).

Participant papers have been analysed through these three lenses as outlined in **Table 1**:

**Table 1: How each lens was applied to the research**

<b>Lens</b>	<b>Question asked</b>
<i>power &amp; knowledge</i>	Does the author demonstrate a recognition of the unique needs of adults with intellectual disability as a minority group through the participation of this group in the research?
<i>space &amp; place</i>	Can the reader identify the importance of associated individual and collective meaning to space and the emotional attachment to this place in the research?
<i>new urbanism</i>	How has the research encapsulated mixed use and compact neighbourhood design features?

Much of the research reviewed, both Australian and international, was concerned with the outcomes for people with disability in the change from institutions to other types of living arrangements. Funding and delivery of support to enable people with disabilities to have choice with their living arrangements was a prominent theme of the research. The availability of appropriate affordable housing for many minority groups was a thread throughout the research that explored housing options.

## THROUGH THE POWER & KNOWLEDGE LENS

Disabled people represent one of the poorest groups in Western society (Tually, Beer & McLoughlin 2011). Apart from being excluded and marginalised from the workplace disabled people are often segregated within schooling, unable to find suitable housing, and have restricted access to public transport (Kitchin 1998; Leiter & Waugh 2009; Tually, Beer & McLoughlin 2011). Kitchin (1998) goes as far as claiming that disabled people are denied access to important decision making positions in society. True involvement in policy decisions regarding their accommodation is almost non-existent according to the research (Bigby, Frawley & Ramcharan 2014; Chenoweth 2000).

### Inclusion is the key

Within the research there is an increasing discussion regarding the separation of the terms ‘access’, ‘participation’ and ‘inclusion’ (Amado 2014; Bigby 2004, 2008; Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015; Bostock & Gleeson 2004; Milner & Kelly 2009; Wiesel & Fisher 2014). Milner and Kelly (2009) go as far

as stating that it is ‘connectedness’ to community, rather than access or participation in activity, that creates inclusion for adults with intellectual disability. Further, there is a necessity to recognise that social inclusion goes beyond physical inclusion. Achieving community inclusion needs much more than a model of housing and support. Multiple strategies at the community level and as well at the individual support, planning and preparation level are required to achieve connectedness (Bigby 2004).

### **Involve the adult with intellectual disability in the decision-making**

Without the presence of the adult with intellectual disability in the macro level decisions of policy and procedure and at the micro level of housing placement, tenancy options and individualised support, community inclusion will not be achieved (Bigby 2004). Bostock and Gleeson (2004) recognise the great efforts that Queensland policy makers have gone to consult with local communities about future plans to site community care homes in their neighbourhoods. However the consultation has not necessarily included the voice of persons with intellectual disabilities. Taleporos et al. (2013, p. 15) warn that “in Australia, the current generation of young people with disabilities (many who have experienced mainstream education) may not identify particularly strongly as ‘a person with a disability’, but rather as a unique individual who merely happens to have a disability.”

### **Tenancy options:**

Tenancy and tenure options present a power and knowledge based barrier to independent living for adults with disabilities in Australia. Persons with a disability are likely to be under-represented in the owner-occupied sector, over-represented as social renters and not have a large share of private tenancies (Hemmingway 2014). Berry et al. (2006) believe that Australian State governments have three major roles in addressing the tenancy issue for persons with disabilities:

They must first separate rent determination from individual incomes within the social housing system. Secondly, they must restructure their own assets (possibly through transfer or internal reorganisation) to allow existing assets (including land and infrastructure as well as housing) to be recycled in such a way that asset values rise. This will enable private funding to be levered in and asset management skills to be developed. Thirdly, they must put in place land use planning arrangements which make it easier to ‘tax’ development gains by requiring land and finance for affordable housing (Berry et al. 2006, p. 320).

These elements of change will not alone deliver successful housing options and community connectedness. Client outcomes, administrative systems, service viability and coordination of support providers are also listed as areas where adults with intellectual disability need to be consulted and included in policy decisions (Fisher, Parker & Purcal 2009).

Hemmingway (2014) cites that the type of communication, or the lack of communication, regarding information from the residential housing and financial sectors can create a barrier to home ownership or private rental opportunities. The ability to successfully apply for a mortgage with a financial institution may become a barrier to achieving independent living (Hemmingway 2014).

Affordability, often around the funding support provided to adults with intellectual disability, is cited throughout the publications as a major barrier to successful housing placement (Beer, Kearins & Pieters 2007; Berry et al. 2006; Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015; Bigby & Fyffe 2009; Bourke 2014; Bridge et al. 2002a; Bridge et al. 2002b; Leiter & Waugh 2009; Squires & Gurran 2005; Tually, Beer & McLoughlin 2011; Wiesel & Fisher 2014). However tenancy, finance and NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) issues all compound the ability of the successful adoption of a housing placement (Bostock & Gleeson 2004; Squires & Gurran 2005).

## **THROUGH THE SPACE AND PLACE LENS**

Connection to a place and the spaces connected to that place is one of the most important factors driving people in choosing where to live (Hemmingway 2014; Massey 1991). Identifying with a place is recognised in the research as an important factor in the accommodation decisions for adults with disabilities (Amado 2014; Bigby 2004; Broadley 2014; Clapham 2002; Kitchin 1998; Lemon & Lemon 2003; Milner & Kelly 2009). Kitchin (1998) states that without an understanding of socio-spatial processes that reproduce social relations, planners and policy writers will be unable to appreciate how disabled people become marginalised and excluded with-in society.

## **The place's physical setting**

Whilst a home means different things to different people it often means more than a shelter or a physical space, especially for those with an intellectual disability (Hemmingway 2014). "A person's home is a sanctuary, a place for rest, for socialising with friends and sharing life with significant others. It is an important platform for life in the community" (Taleporos et al. 2013, p. 8). Childhood experiences underpin much of the wants of young adults seeking to leave the family home (Leiter & Waugh 2009). It is a challenge for us all to temper wants with needs, however in order to change a person's life their space should be first considered (Lefebvre 1991).

Access is a major issue for everyone in deciding where to live. "Accessibility is more than the dwelling itself, and can include accessibility to the local environment, public services and amenities and the proximity of good transport links" (Hemmingway 2014, p. 166). Being able to maintain connections with family, friends and community activity are access considerations linked to the physical setting. It is in the street and neighbourhood in which social inclusion occurs (Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015). Places and spaces that exclude disabled people are rarely natural, rather are a result of state policy, building regulations and architectural and planning practices (Imrie 2001).

## **Activities, situations and events**

Places where community members gather to associate, share stories and meet a diverse range of people is also an important consideration when a person is choosing where to live. The same is true for adults with intellectual disabilities and such place destinations should include, for example, cafes, coffee shops, beauty parlours, bars, community centres, and many family-owned shops or enterprises where "regulars" hang out, gossip, and socialise (Amado 2014; Milner & Kelly 2009).

Places that promote a sense of membership and belonging, besides formal and informal groups, are community places that are welcoming, where an interest can be shared and a place where people with disability can assist, volunteer or have a meaningful role (Amado 2014). However, these places also need to avoid creating an area of concentration of people with disability (Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015; Tually, Beer & McLoughlin 2011). When determining locations for suitable housing to provide independent living opportunities organisations, housing providers and 'gatekeepers' attitudes, assumptions and practices may just be as disabling as the physical and financial environment (Hemmingway 2014).

## **The individual and group meanings created through people's experiences and intentions**

Place or location attachment is considered as an emotional, cognitive and functional bond with a place (Jorgensen & Stedman 2001). Leiter and Waugh (2009) suggest the notion that the family members and their lives are linked and interdependent. Therefore for each adult with intellectual disability their connection to place and space will be unique, based on their life experiences to date. Places that promote a sense of belonging and where experiences are shared will promote a sense of self-worth for different individuals for different reasons (Amado 2014; Hemmingway 2014). Amado (2014) discusses the benefits of friendship and belonging with ordinary community members for adults with intellectual disabilities. These benefits include acceptance, having someone to spend time with and an increase in self-confidence in knowing that they matter (Amado 2014; Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015; Tually, Beer & McLoughlin 2011).

It should not be expected that a person with intellectual disability will find accommodation and stay there for life (Coulter, van Ham & Findlay 2015). Staying in the one place for a long time is no longer the norm in the contemporary society, as people are constantly circulating and settling again (Lefebvre 2014). In addition the normal desire to move for jobs, or simply for a change; an adult with intellectual disability may need to move for health purposes as their personal needs change.

## **THROUGH THE NEW URBANISM LENS**

The notion of live, work and play within the community matches well with what the research suggests as the ideal housing location for an adult with intellectual disabilities. However, New Urbanist planning that only constructs spaces that prioritise the dominant values of the able-bodied community, risks creating a designed apartheid for people with disabilities (Kitchin 1998). However, for a person with a disability who lives alone or in shared accommodation with non-disabled persons in a regular street, community or neighbourhood, there abounds a multitude of opportunities for the person with disabilities to connect with those around them (Amado 2014).

New Urbanism influenced planned communities resonate the choice agenda ideals (Bigby & Fyffe 2009), the success underpinning Canada's community based cooperatives (Lemon & Lemon 2003), and good quality of life outcomes for adults with intellectual disability (Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015; Kozma, Mansell & Beadle-Brown 2009; Wiesel & Fincher 2009).

### **Supportive communities for people with intellectual disability**

In general, research indicates that dispersed housing in the community provides a better quality of life and is at least as cost-effective as institutional and larger group care (Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015; Taleporos et al. 2013). Overwhelmingly, "the evidence points to community settings being preferable to institutional ones for most individuals with an intellectual disability" (Taleporos et al. 2013, p. 11). The importance of community inclusion is acknowledged as essential for self-worth and social wellbeing (Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015; Bigby & Fyffe 2009).

In comparing dispersed, clustered and institutionalised accommodation the housing needs for adults with intellectual disability is much the same for all young adults leaving the family home for the first time (Mansell & Beadle-Brown 2009a, 2009b). Parents and the adults with intellectual disability both identify as significant factors; the desire for quality housing, a range of housing, location of the housing to allow for easy access to shops, services, employment, further education and the ability to maintain social networks within the general community (Cooper-Stanbury 2012; Hutch et al. 2011; Shaw, Cartwright & Craig 2011; Taleporos et al. 2013).

The community placement of housing is crucial. Bullying and high incidents of crime against people with disabilities are cited as some outcomes of disability housing in social housing estates that lack mixture of tenure overall (Aspis 2005). Facilitating education within a community, and identifying appropriate supportive communities to help residents understand and value the social capital an adult with intellectual disability brings to a community, is an important factor to achieving inclusion and connectedness opportunities (Bostock & Gleeson 2004; Onyx & Bullen 2000). Wiesel and Fincher (2009) warn against the fostering of community members to have the right to choose not to accept tenants with a disability. "A focus on choice in the context of an excluding community may actually undermine real individual choice for people with intellectual disabilities, as the community has more power to execute its choices than a person with a disability" Wiesel and Fincher (2009, p. 620). The NIMBY syndrome should not be allowed to interfere with the best placement of dispersed housing, especially if it is due to communities being poorly educated about what people with disabilities can bring to a neighbourhood (Bostock & Gleeson 2004; Hemmingway 2014).

### **WHERE ARE THE GAPS AND WHAT OF THE FUTURE?**

Much of the research in recent years has focused on the outcomes of deinstitutionalisation. The impact of funding in the delivery of support to persons with disability has been a major focus of research in Australia (Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015). Research focussing on affordable housing, social housing, and the housing needs of youth have all been topical in academia in recent years (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2015; Beer, Kearins & Pieters 2007; Clapham et al. 2012; Hefferan, Wardner & Mannix 2011; Shaw, Cartwright & Craig 2011; Taleporos et al. 2013; Tually, Beer & McLoughlin 2011).

The gap between policy and implementation of quality affordable dispersed housing for adults with an intellectual disability in Australia is recognised in much of the literature (Bigby, Bould & Beadle-Brown 2015; Bigby & Fyffe 2009; Bridge et al. 2002a; Bridge et al. 2002b; Gilmour 2008; Kothari 2006; Parker & Fisher 2010). Policy documents emphasise choice, the separation of housing and support, and individual options (Bigby & Fyffe 2009).

Looking forward to Australia's adoption of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2016, the opportunity may exist to address the implementation and policy gaps. However, the concern is that in the rush to deliver new supply of housing for people with disability, the consultation and implementation processes may be overlooked (Bourke 2014; Wiesel & Fisher 2014). Further, the hope that the NDIS would provide funding for housing is not looking likely with Bourke (2014) suggesting that the money will not be made available specifically for accommodation. Ensuring adults with intellectual disabilities are authentically involved in the decision making process for housing placement at the planning and development level would appear crucial to getting it right for the future (Beail & Williams 2014; Chenoweth 2000).

From this review it is recognised that safe, accessible, affordable dispersed housing in neighbourhoods that have inclusive community activities; good transport, health services and employment opportunities would seem to be preferred locations for independent living opportunities for young adults with intellectual disability. The ongoing research agenda proposed by these authors considers many of the issues discussed. The research will progress in three phases. Firstly the research will involve asking parents, adults with intellectual disability and service providers as to their locational and residential preferences for independent living opportunities. Next, an assessment of how the planning scheme documents support such neighbourhoods will provide insights to influence the planning for and development of new supportive communities. Finally an empirical framework will be developed to allow stakeholders in the property and housing and land development industry to create supportive neighbourhoods for adults with intellectual disability. This work seeks to attain independent living opportunities on the Sunshine Coast for a range of vulnerable groups.

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