NDIS Housing Pathways Project
Whole of Community Pilot
Mt Alexander Shire NDIS Housing: MASARG Castlemaine

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Executive Summary

The rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has commenced in Castlemaine. Over the next few years NDIS may:

- Fund approximately 30 extra people to get disability services and become NDIS participants
- Fund an extra $3.5m p.a. for services to NDIS participants
- Mean more than 20 NDIS participants will be looking for non-NDIS funded housing because they now have adequate and portable support
- Mean that eight NDIS participants will be eligible to receive NDIS housing funding through NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) funding

This MASARG Castlemaine Whole of Community Pilot is set over two years to promote and deliver housing for a small but diverse range of NDIS participants who wish to live in Castlemaine. The Pilot will have three broad aims:

- Inform and engage a specific community, in this case, Castlemaine, in pursuing housing for the NDIS participants who wish to live in that community, in this project, people with an intellectual disability
- Deliver housing outcomes for the NDIS participants who are part of the Pilot
- Prove and refine a transferable methodology for the delivery of housing for NDIS participants

The project will act as a pilot to showcase a transferable methodology and framework that can be applied to communities where there is need to explore and promote housing pathways available for NDIS participants.

These participants may potentially be housed in one of a number of housing segments.
Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA):

- Will only be available to the 6% of NDIS participants with the highest levels of need
- Will fund both new and existing SDA stock (which does not currently exist in Castlemaine)
- Will provide recurrent housing funding on average of approximately $20,000 or more per person per annum (NDIS does not provide capital funding)
- Support funding for people living in SDA with Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding of often be $150,000 per annum per person or more
- Is no longer being developed as group houses but rather a mixture of stock
- Built in Castlemaine would allow people to return to Castlemaine, to move out of inappropriate housing (such as residential aged care or hospital) or out of unsustainable housing (such as living with ageing carers)

The Pilot is constructed around seven areas of activity each with defined actions, timelines and anticipated outputs:

- Local Leadership Organisation Commitment
- Community Engagement
- Leadership Group
- Community Communication
- NDIS participants
- Segment Working Groups
- Review and Wind up

The delivery of these outputs will rely on a range of individuals and organisations working in an integrated way including a Local Leadership Organisation, the Melbourne Disability Institute, a Project Leadership Group, multiple Segment Working Groups, a Project Evaluator and a Project Sponsor. The latter is critical as resources will be needed to fund the local co-ordination and project evaluation.

A lack of housing for NDIS participants in Castlemaine is preventing residents from living in their town in appropriate and sustainable housing. The window created by the rollout of the NDIS to develop new housing options is time limited and requires a coordinated, whole of community housing development effort resourced and sustained over multiple years. If housing is not secured not only will NDIS participants miss out on opportunities to participate in their community, the broader community will miss the opportunity for significant social change, economic activity and employment opportunities.
Proposal

This is a proposal for MASARG to lead a Whole of Community Pilot to secure housing for NDIS participants who wish to live in the community of Castlemaine. This process will also engage stakeholders in the broader community to support the creation of housing opportunities. The proposal has been prepared with the assistance of the Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI).

Mt Alexander Shire Accommodation and Respite Group (MASARG)

MASARG is an independent, not-for-profit charitable organisation working to address the critical need for temporary respite, as well as permanent accommodation, for adults with disabilities in Castlemaine and the Mount Alexander region.¹

MASARG produced “A Home of Their Own”² report in 2015 and an Update report³ in 2017. The 2015 report surveyed eighteen people with an intellectual disability in the Mount Alexander Shire who wished to live in permanent accommodation, independently of parents and carers within two to five years. The project purpose was to explore innovative designs and operational models, prepare individuals and families with realistic information about NDIS support and identify and establish potential partnerships with people with disability, parents/carers and housing providers to deliver affordable and suitable supported accommodation options. Further, it sought to identify what capital funding may be required to assist the establishment of supported accommodation.

The eighteen respondents were diverse (Attachment: A Home of My Own” (2015) Respondents) The key themes of the report were:

• The majority wanted to live in their own home in Castlemaine (not with family) usually with one other.
• Older parents were concerned when they are no longer able to care and are looking for appropriate levels of support and security.
• Support networks that maximise personal freedom but enable safety were viewed positively.

In 2017 a report⁴ was completed that provided an update on the status of the original eighteen. It revealed that, of the 18 participants seeking housing, at least ten were still looking for a new home.

The report also proposed the potential future roles for MASARG:

• Advocating to Housing Associations, Council etc. to ensure Housing developments meet preferred outcome of people with disability
• Educational role in researching and informing the broader community’s understanding of NDIS challenges and opportunities
• Influencing planning laws to help shape incentives from MAS for potential housing developments
• Become a disability housing provider owning and managing property (Later rejected by MASARG in favour of partnering with local Community Housing providers)
• Act as a broker to assist families and individuals in matching housing opportunity to their choice

• Manage the Network Contact for a keyring network

It is reported that MASARG has been committed to and active in all areas except becoming a disability housing provider deferring to the local Housing Association, Haven: Home, Safe.

Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI)

The Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI) is an interdisciplinary research institute that was established by the University of Melbourne in 2018 to build a collaborative, interdisciplinary and translational research program to improve the lives of people with disability.5

MDI’s vision is to transform the social and economic wellbeing and health of people with disability through high-quality research, teaching and translation of knowledge.

Its mission is to, in partnership with key stakeholders, catalyse interdisciplinary research and teaching that addresses complex, systemic and cultural problems facing people with disability, their families and carers. The knowledge produced through the research will be translated into policy and practice through a process of continuous engagement and innovation.

The MDI is led by Professor Bruce Bonyhady AM, Executive Chair and Director and Professor Anne Kavanagh, Academic Director. Included in its staff is Joseph Connellan, Senior Manager – Housing.

5 https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/
Housing NDIS Participants

People with a disability may confront one or more barriers to access and/or maintain their housing. These barriers may be complex and diverse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Management</th>
<th>Support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– robust and engaged with support providers</td>
<td>– adequate and responsive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– well located and appropriately specialised</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– either rental or ownership</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– including details of and access to different options</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– Living Skill Development for Participants and Preparation for Families</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NDIS participants may live in any of a number of interconnected housing segments with different models and providers in each segment.

- **New Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)** to grow by more than 14,000
- **Existing SDA** often transferred from Govt and may house Non-SDA
- **Non-SDA Supported Accommodation** for participants who do not qualify for SDA
- **Social Housing** including public housing, community housing and affordable housing
- **Private Rental** including Co-Residency, Homeshare and Headlease
- **In Own Home** growing through family funded projects
- **In Family Home** often with ageing carers

In Castlemaine the NDIS may:

- Fund approximately 30 extra people to get disability services and become NDIS participants
- Fund an extra $3.5m p.a. for services to NDIS participants
- Mean more than 20 NDIS participants will be looking for non-NDIS funded housing because they move have adequate and portable support
Bringing Castlemaine SDA Recipients Home

Statically it could be expected that Castlemaine would include accommodation for more than eight people to receive NDIS housing funding through NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) (with up a further twelve accommodated in the broader Mt Alexander Shire). However, no SDA exist in Castlemaine or is known to be in the development process. (One person likely to be eligible for SDA is accommodated in a local residential aged care facility).

Former Castlemaine residents eligible for SDA are likely to be living in larger population centres such as Bendigo or Melbourne. Others may be living in neighbouring areas where disability accommodation has previously been built such as Kyneton. The introduction of portable and adequate support under the NDIS now provides the opportunity to bring these Castlemaine residents back to Castlemaine.

Any relocation is premised on having appropriate SDA housing available. The NDIS will fully, recurrently and commercially fund such accommodation on occupancy removing one of the key barriers that have existed in the past. The key requirement for development to occurs is for organisation(s) to take on the roles of developer, financier, owner, housing manager and support provider.

Failure to build SDA may represent a significant missed economic opportunity. Construction cost for eight places of SDA would be typically more than $2m (in addition to land cost). Recurrent funding for support is likely to be more than $1.2m p.a. with a large amount of these funds spent on local employment, goods and services. Employment in support provision will be accessible to local people including those seeking part-time work and those who may lack significant higher education.

New Housing Diversity

Housing for people with a disability is often framed around a single option such as a group house often driven by historical limitations of support and housing capital funding. The NDIS is increasing the options available to more fully reflect those available in the community. For example, the NDIS will fund SDA that:

- Has five levels of design being Basic, Improved Accessibility, Fully Accessibility, Robust and High Physical
- Includes four building types nominated as Apartment, Villa / Duplex /Townhouse, House and Group home
- Includes a mixture of sizes from one to five people in each unit
- Has limitations in numbers that can be accommodated under one roof (5) on one site (15)
MDI NDIS Housing Pathways Project

The Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI) National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Housing Pathways Project is a seven-month project (running until June 2019) being undertaken at the Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI) within the University of Melbourne. The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), the NDIS funded Local Area Coordinator for North West Melbourne, is co-funding the project.

The NDIS Housing Pathways Project aims to provide practical resources for individuals and communities to build pathways to access and maintain housing for NDIS participants by promoting existing options and encouraging the transfer of proven models around Australia.

![Diagram: Inspiration, Possibility, Capacity](https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/housing#question)

Specifically, the project is seeking to expand the housing possibilities for NDIS participants with the intersection of their aspiration and capacity.

This is in recognition that NDIS participants may have limitations on their capacity in one or more areas such as physical, cognitive and financial capacity.

While the NDIS Housing Pathways Project is framed around the interconnected housing segments, the Project will focus mostly on those not in or eligible for SDA, “the Other 94%” on the basis there is money and skilled operators in the SDA space already.

The MDI recognises that there is already a diverse set of proven options, expertise and housing resources available but that these may not be accessible to NDIS participants, their families, Local Area Co-ordinators and service providers. The NDIS, as a new national scheme, also provides an opportunity to transfer proven methodologies from other jurisdictions and those developed for different target groups. As undertaking research is central to the project, the MDI will also be seeking to engage with researchers from the University of Melbourne and other universities.

The NDIS Housing Pathways Project aims to:

- Identify and review existing information, services and research including posting answers to questions gathered via “My NDIS Housing Question”\(^6\). This may also include providing direct links between practitioners working independently on similar issues.
- Produce resources in a variety of formats including digital.
- Distribute the resources to a range of groups commencing with Local Area Co-ordinators including through the Housing page of the MDI website

\(^6\) [https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/housing#question](https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/housing#question)
Develop and pilot training packages based on the material produced focused initially on resourcing Local Area Co-ordinators (LACs).

Develop and pilot a community-based methodology to support communities to build pathways to housing for the first group of NDIS participants in their community.

Deliver outcomes-focused, segmented, structured community engagement, education and action to house the NDIS participants in their community.

**NDIS Housing Pathways Whole of Community Workplan**

This proposal seeks to use and adapt from a standardised, segmented approach. It is anticipated that this proposal will be used as a proforma for future projects in other communities.

**Purpose, Assumptions and Development Process**

The purpose of the proposed Whole of Community Workplan is to support a community in developing an action plan to build pathways to house the first group of NDIS participants. Plans will be constructed around an outcomes-focused, segmented, structured community engagement and education program which has broad engagement with stakeholders.

The development of the Whole of Community Workplans is based around a number of assumptions:

- In this project, three types of communities are defined: Geographic (around the local area in this project, Castlemaine), of Interest (including CALD groups) and Service (around a support provider).
- That useful and proven housing solutions exist around Australia including in different systems.
- Housing solutions can be woven by collective and cooperative action for those NDIS participants who do not have an entitlement.
- Communities are willing to help NDIS participants in their community secure housing but are mostly they are not engaged, nor informed about the housing requirements or options available.

The Whole of Community Workplan Pilot will be undertaken in a two-part process:

**Part 1: Process Co-Design**
Develop a local NDIS Housing Pathways Whole of Community Workplan

**Part 2: Piloting**
Implement the NDIS Housing Pathways Whole of Community Workplan in the Pilot Community

Diagram: Two Part Process
Development Areas
Broadly a segmented approach will be adopted:

Areas and Actions
The project will comprise of a number of specific actions framed under a series of interrelated areas:

- **Project Initiation**
  - Community stakeholders briefed on housing NDIS participants and the project
  - Proposal made to funders to seeking local resourcing funding

- **Local Organisation Commitment**
  - Key Local Organisations briefed on project focus, resource requirements and crossover with their own work
  - Local Organisation invited to join the project leadership group and segment groups

- **Community Engagement**
  - Community briefed on housing challenges and opportunities for NDIS participants in their community and the project
  - Community provided with regular updates on progress through short reports in variety mechanisms

- **Project Leadership Group**
  - Project Leadership group formed and endorses workplan
  - Project Leadership Group meets regularly to oversee project process, receive reports from Segment Groups and clear roadblocks

- **Community Communication**
  - A detailed community communication plan is developed with a variety of targets and techniques
  - Community communication plan is implemented, and impact monitored

- **NDIS participants**
  - NDIS participants are recruited and families, carers, LACs and support coordinators engaged
  - Report on housing progress of NDIS participants compiled and shared regularly.

- **Segment Working Groups**
  - Segments groups formed, and meetings facilitated: Transition, Development (inc SDA), Rental and Own Home
  - As the Segment Working Groups are the engine room of the project, they will require significant and sustained resourcing

- **Project Evaluation**
  - Project evaluator appointed to document and review the project development and delivery
  - Project reports compiled with two versions - general (public release) and process improvement (for leadership group)

Diagram: Development Areas
Organisational Roles

It is anticipated that the following groups will be central to the successful project:

- **Local Leadership Organisation** - Organisation that assumes leadership the project
- **Melbourne Disability Institute** - MDI provides high-level advice and briefing
- **Project Leadership group** - Group formed to provide oversight of the project include key local stakeholders as well as the MDI
- **All Segment Working Group**
  - Transition for NDIS participants and families
  - Rental
  - Projects (inc. SDA)
  - Own Home
- **Project Evaluator** - Organisation commissioned to review and evaluate the project
- **Project Sponsor Organisations** - that provides funding and resources for the project

Lead Agency Selection

The project lead agency will be an organisation that leads the multi-year project to secure housing for a number of NDIS participants people across their catchment in a variety of solutions. The suitability of the lead agency will be informed by their mission, functions, catchment and scale. Because of the diversity of the task covering a number of housing segments the lead agency may or may not be a housing or a NDIS services provider.

Lead agencies will self-select and need to demonstrate:

- High level of engagement and commitment
- Have a proven track record
- Have a focus on securing diverse housing solutions
- A multi-year commitment
- Capacity to bring together multi groups within the community.
Communication

A comprehensive communication and engagement strategy with a diverse range of stakeholders will be central to the success of the Whole of Community Plan. These may be different in different housing segments but may overlap. They may include community linking organisations disability-specific organisations such as LACs or community-wide networking groups such as Rotary or Lions Clubs. It will be important that the broader community is engaged as well as people beyond the immediate decision makers.

Diagram: Roles within Stakeholders

A variety of tools and techniques may be used in communication.

Diagram: Communication Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Full report  
• Summary  
• Presentations | • Written  
• In person  
• Video and audio | • Reports of success  
• Proposals from reputable organisations |
MASARG Castlemaine NDIS Housing Pilot Project

The Whole of Community Pilot will build on the previous successful and sustained work of MASARG in promoting housing for NDIS participants in Castlemaine. MASARG has a multi-year track record of promoting housing for NDIS participants (in part through the production of two reports), deep engagement with the community and track record of sustained effort including the recent Castlemaine housing forum.

This Pilot is seeking to create a transferable framework that can be applied to other communities. In the case of this Pilot it recognised that:

- MASARG will be the Local Leadership Organisation
- The Community focus will be a geographic one being those NDIS participants who wish to live in Castlemaine
- The initial NDIS participants will be NDIS participants with an intellectual disability who wish to live in Castlemaine.

By building on existing practice, this Pilot can be more confident of the robustness of its methodology and can accelerate the project. This approach also strengthens the co-design approach to the development of the processes are being undertaken with MASARG.

**Pilot Process Structure**

The project process is being framed over two years and the previously defined seven development areas. In each case, specific actions, anticipated outputs, task leadership, timelines and required resources are documented.

**Pilot Target Participants**

The pilot project target group will be people with an intellectual disability who wish to live in Castlemaine. They may also have a physical disability, be on the autism spectrum and/or have mental health issues. This is consistent with MASARF’s target group. It is acknowledged that there may be Castlemaine NDIS participants who are outside this group however it is hoped they will benefit from both a broader community interest in housing and the development of new housing options for NDIS participants.
MASARG Castlemaine Roadmap

**PROJECT INITIATION**
- Community stakeholder briefing
  - Proposal to funders

**LOCAL ORGANISATION COMMITMENT**
- Local organisations briefed and leadership roles discussed

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
- Community briefings

**PROJECT LEADERSHIP GROUP**
- Form Project Leadership group
  - Leadership Meeting
- Leadership Meeting
  - Leadership Meeting
  - Leadership Meeting

**COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION**
- Develop Comms Plan
  - Implement Community Communications Plan
- Recruit NDIS Participants
  - Report on housing progress

**NDIS PARTICIPANTS**

**SEGMENT WORKING GROUPS**
- Form Segment Groups
  - Segment Meeting
  - Segment Meeting
  - Segment Meeting
  - Segment Meeting

**PROJECT EVALUATION**
- Appoint project evaluator
  - Deliver project reports

**Timeline**

- **2019**
  - APR
  - MAY
  - JUN
  - JUL
  - AUG
  - SEPT
  - OCT
  - NOV
  - DEC
- **2020**
  - JAN
  - FEB
  - MAR
  - APR
  - MAY
  - JUN
  - JUL
  - AUG
  - SEPT
  - OCT
  - NOV
  - DEC
- **2021**
  - JAN
  - FEB
  - MAR
  - APR
  - MAY
  - JUN

15
**Budget and Resources**

Resourcing and funding will be required for a number of functions to support the Local Leadership Organisation deliver the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>By</th>
<th>Cost (inc. GST)</th>
<th>Co-Funded by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project management and support</td>
<td>Local Leadership Organisation</td>
<td>$70,000 (over 2 years)</td>
<td>MASARG and Sponsor Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the project</td>
<td>Project Evaluator</td>
<td>$15,000 (over 2 years)</td>
<td>Sponsor Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Project Leadership group</td>
<td>Melbourne Disability Institute</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>In-kind by Melbourne Disability Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and community-specific information in each segment</td>
<td>Melbourne Disability Institute</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>In-kind by Melbourne Disability Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Project Leadership group</td>
<td>Melbourne Disability Institute</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>In-kind by Melbourne Disability Institute to 30 June 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Role of Project Co-ordinator**

The key resourcing function will be a part-time project co-ordinator who will, over the two-year life of the project:

- Liaise with all stakeholders
- Resource meetings of leadership group and segment groups
- Act a conduit of information exchange between the groups
- Be a point of contact for all project communication
- Organise public and community briefings
- Liaise with the Melbourne Disability Institute
- Link to other NDIS Housing Projects that may form

The individual segment groups (including the NDIS participants groups) will be led by others resourced from outside of the project.
Benefits for Stakeholders

This complex community project will have number of different but overlapping potential benefits for a range of stakeholders:

- **NDIS participants** will receive information about and assistance to secure housing
- **Families and carers** will receive information about housing options they may be unaware of and an opportunity to link to others interested in the issue.
- **Local Leadership Organisation**, in this case, MASARG, will continue its efforts to house people with a disability in their community and demonstrate leadership on this critical issue.
- **Local Service Clubs** the project will contribute to a solid foundation for future building and housing projects in their community
- **Local Government** will value the opportunity to support local community to engage with and address the issues of housing affordability and accessibility
- **Local Businesses** who will benefit NDIS funded economic activity.
- **Project Sponsor** can demonstrate a commitment to the local community with a model that can be transferred to other communities.
- **Project Evaluator** will have an opportunity to engage with and contribute to an issue that is topical and significant
- **Melbourne Disability Institute** will secure a practical example for a key part of its NDIS Housing Partnership Project
- **Local Property Businesses** such as real estate agents, developers and builder can both strengthen links to community and increase their understanding of the NDIS opportunities.
- **Support Providers** can potentially secure housing for some their clients and understand transferrable housing opportunities
- **Housing organisations** can potentially increase their supply of affordable housing and understand the contributions that can be potentially made by NDIS to their other tenants

Further Information

Further information about this project proposal can be provided by MASARG. Bev Vines, President of bevandrobyn@bigpond.com. This workplan has been developed by Joseph Connellan, Senior Manager – Housing, Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI), The University of Melbourne Joseph’s contact details are M: 0438 388 444 E: joseph.connellan@unimelb.edu.au.
**Attachment: A Home of My Own (2015) Respondents**

The eighteen respondents:

- Had a majority of females (Gender: female [11] and male [7]).
- Were mostly under 35 or over 45 (Age range: 18-35 [8], 36-45 [4] and 45 [6])
- By large majority lived with Parents (Living arrangements: With family/parents [13], Aged Care [2] and Other [2])
- Mostly lived in Castlemaine or surrounding towns (Current location: Castlemaine [10], surrounding town [6], outside shire [2])
- Typically, has limited support requirements (Personal support needs: Minimum 1 hr. per day [8], Medium 2-4 hrs. [6], High 24 hr. [4])
- Were mostly unemployed (Employment: Open [1 P/T], supported employment [5], not employed [12])
- Mostly Received both DSP and had Individual support packages (ISPs) (Income and funding: DSP [18], Individual support packages (ISPs) [16], Respite [5], Ageing Carers [3])
- Typically wished to share with up to two others (Preferred future arrangements: Sharing with up to two [14], family [2], on own [1] no change [1])
- Wished to live in Castlemaine (Preferred location: Castlemaine [14] and Bendigo [1])
- Preferred either private or social housing rental (Preferred type: Rental [6] Purchase [2] Social housing [7]).


In 2017 a report was completed that provided an update on the status of the original eighteen found that:

- 8 still live with families (inc. 2 in bungalows/units on parent’s property)
- 3 live in aged care (1 would like to move out)
- 2 live in private rental in Castlemaine after living in Kyneton for 12 months to learn Independent Living Skills
- 1 had both parents die, and family is supporting him in the family home
- 1 was soon to move to a group house in Maryborough due to the health of parents and herself
- 1 had sadly died

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