

My Home My Design: Making Individualised Living Arrangements Real Project Evaluation Report



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Executive Summary



Michael's story: Redefining possibilities in individualised living

When Michael turned 21, his family found themselves at a crossroads. As parents of a young man with high support needs, they faced the daunting task of planning for Michael's future living arrangements as they aged. Initially, the path seemed clear-cut. Supported Disability Accommodation (SDA) appeared to be the best and most logical option, and where many of Michael's friends had moved. However, after Michael's family attended a focus group session organised by the My Home My Design: Making ILO Real Project (the Project), their eyes were opened to other possibilities. This was the catalyst for changing their approach to Michael's future living arrangements.

The family began working with a ILO Project navigator, who provided a wealth of resources and real-life examples of different living arrangements. The more they learned, the more they felt that an individualised living arrangement would give Michael the independence they wanted. Inspired by this newly gained knowledge, the family began envisioning purchasing a home for Michael, one where he could live alongside carefully chosen housemates. These individuals could support Michael in day-to-day life while being part of his social network and fostering genuine companionship and inclusion.

Although the process is ongoing, the family's uncertainty about Michael's living arrangement and the once-daunting task of planning for the future has subsided. The project has empowered Michael's family to dream bigger and reach further. They've taken steps to explore financial options and find potential housemates and they now feel hopeful and excited for the future. By showcasing alternatives to traditional living arrangements and providing the right guidance and support the project has shown it's possible for young people like Michael, with high support needs, to live fulfilling lives and included / integrated into their communities.

Project Overview

The My Home My Design: Making Individualised Living Arrangements (ILA)* Real project is a Department of Social Services funded initiative aimed at empowering people with developmental disability and their families. Coordinated by Valued Lives Foundation (VLF) and implemented by the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO), the project received an initial grant of \$999,900 (ex GST) in December 2020 and an additional \$718,000 (ex GST) in January 2022 to extend its activities. The goal was to enhance understanding and navigation of ILA's, shifting from traditional group home settings to more personalised living arrangements for people with developmental disability.

*(*The project was originally called Making Individualized Living Options (ILO) Real. Use of ILO in the name, confused stakeholders, as it was assumed the project was focused on accessing NDIS ILO funding only and not its broader goal of personalised living arrangements).*

Objectives

- Increase awareness and knowledge of home and living options and the process of developing an individualised living arrangement (ILA).
- Build the capacity and confidence of people with developmental disability and their families to explore home and living options and develop ILAs.
- Deepen understanding of funding options available for developing ILAs, including but not limited to NDIS ILO funding.
- Develop a scalable ILA navigation model based on capacity building principles.

Deliverables

- An online step-by-step guide for navigating the process of developing ILAs, including accessing NDIS ILO funding.
- A train-the-trainer program for ILA Navigators (mentors).
- An ILA navigation service offering workshops, mentoring, and 1:1 support.
- A scalable model for ILA navigation services.

Activities

The project developed a comprehensive ILO Toolkit resource for people with developmental disability and their families to support them to navigate the process of developing an ILA, including accessing NDIS ILO funding. The ILO Toolkit also acted as an ongoing training and

resource platform for ILA Navigators employed part-time (1 by each NACBO partner) to provide support and mentoring to people with developmental disability and their families. ILA Navigators engaged in monthly Community of Practice (CoP) meetings that aimed to support the professional development of ILA Navigators and facilitate engagement with the NDIA ILO team.

Evaluation Findings

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

In total, 6,161 people with disability, families, supporters, service providers and others engaged in the project. This is made up of:

- 1:1 consultation, mentoring and coaching:
 - People with developmental disability: 359
 - Families: 699
- Service providers: 235
- ILO Toolkit: 3,928 unique visitors since it was launched in 2023
- Workshops/webinars/Expos: 532 participants
- Home Peer groups: 408 participants

Key findings include:

- Engaging in the project improved participant's knowledge and understanding and increased their confidence to explore and navigate the process of developing ILAs.
- Barriers to exploring and developing ILAs included perceived safeguarding concerns, lack of affordable housing, the complexity of NDIS funding, and limited support networks.
- The project successfully achieved its objectives and deliverables, despite barriers to implementation including staff capacity and COVID-19.

Impact and Lessons Learned

Key lessons include:

- Housing affordability is a major barrier to people with developmental disability moving into an ILA
- The time taken to explore and develop ILAs is significant and needs to be factored into funding and support plans
- Engagement with informal and mainstream community supports alongside paid support is essential

- Further investment is needed to improve service provider’s knowledge and understanding of ILAs.
- Lived experience of exploring and developing an ILA is valuable when supporting people with disability and their families through this process.
- Providing ongoing mentoring and facilitating peer connections for people with developmental disability and their families is important.

Recommendations

Recommended project improvements are:

- Fund NACBO to employ full-time ILA Navigators (one per State) to build the capacity of people with developmental disability and their families to explore and develop ILAs
- Increase the focus on connecting people with developmental disability and families to peers who have experience of exploring, navigating and implementing ILO arrangements
- Engage with disability services and supports within the community to increase their knowledge and understanding of ILAs

Further systemic recommendations for supporting the capacity of people with developmental disability and their families to develop ILAs include:

- Reducing the complexity of the NDIS funding process
- Provision of a free specialist ILA navigation service for all people with developmental disability and their families, independent of service provision/support coordination and funding

Future Directions

The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project has been a significant success, supporting over 6,000 people with developmental disability, families, and service providers to explore home and living options and develop an understanding of ILAs. The project has provided essential resources, peer mentoring, and personalised support, helping participants navigate a complex system and take meaningful steps towards creating their own living arrangements. This work has shown that ILAs offer genuine choice, control, and community inclusion for people with disability. By building the confidence and capacity of participants, the project has supported people with disability and their families to see beyond traditional group-based home and living settings towards personalised and inclusive living environments. The positive outcomes demonstrate the value of supporting people with developmental disability and their

families to create a vision of home and living that reflects their unique needs and aspirations and working to effect broader changes in housing options and policy.

To continue building on this success, further investment is necessary. The demand for ILAs is growing, and expanding the project would enable more people with developmental disability to access the support they need to make informed choices about their home and living arrangements. The My Home My Design: Making ILA Real project underscored the need for skilled support to enhance people with developmental disability and families' ability to navigate the ILA process. Suggested future actions include expanding specialist ILA Navigation services so more people with developmental disability and their families have the capacity and confidence to explore and develop ILAs. Specialist ILA Navigation services can support people with developmental disability and their families by providing access to comprehensive information about home and living options, facilitating ILA visioning and planning sessions, and connecting participants with peers who have experience exploring and developing ILAs. Additionally, targeted training for service providers and enhanced peer mentoring networks will ensure more people with developmental disability and their families can access the information they need to start the ILA process. These measures would not only improve quality of life for people with developmental disability but also contribute to systemic change by promoting more inclusive and person-centred home and living models.

Overall, the My Home My Design: Making ILA Real project significantly contributed to increasing awareness of ILAs and its insights will help shape future frameworks for supporting people with developmental disability and their families to navigate the process of developing ILAs. Ongoing government support for ILA Navigators will ensure that the momentum created by this project is not lost and that more people with developmental disability can live independently, with dignity and control over their own lives.



Project Overview

The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project is an empowering initiative that supports people with developmental disability and their families to explore and implement individualised living arrangements. Funded by the Department of Social Services and coordinated by Valued Lives Foundation (VLF) through the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO), this project helps people with developmental disability and their families make informed choices about where and how they live. By providing practical guidance, peer mentoring, and leadership opportunities, the project equips individuals with the skills and confidence to exercise genuine choice and control over their living arrangements.

Traditional living options, such as group homes, often prioritise the needs of service providers over those of people with developmental disability, offering limited choice and control. The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project seeks to transform this promoting person-centred approaches that support people with developmental disability to create a vision of what "home" truly means to them. While the term ILO has become closely associated with a specific funding stream under the NDIS, this project adopts a broader definition of ILO and refers to the exploration of the full range of home and living options available to people with developmental disability and the development of individualised living arrangements, which may involve accessing support from NDIS funding streams—such as ILO, Supported Independent Living (SIL), or Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)—from alternative funding sources, or through private means. To avoid confusion with the NDIS funding stream, this report will use the term Individualised Living Arrangements (ILA).

The project is grounded in the principles of person-centred planning and capacity building and aligns with the Individualised Supported Living (ISL) Framework, developed through extensive research led by Curtin University in collaboration with disability sector organisations. The ISL Framework emphasises the importance of focusing on person-centred approaches (One Person at a Time) that support families and people with disability to exercise choice and when developing an inclusive and future focused plan for home and living. By focusing on building the capacity of families and people with development disability to explore their options and develop an ILA, the project supports a future where "home" is not dictated by institutional norms or funding constraints but is a place of one's own choosing, tailored to personal aspirations and supported by a thriving community.

Background

The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project is a Department of Social Services-funded Information, Linkages, and Capacity Building (ILC) program implemented by NACBO and coordinated by Valued Lives Foundation (VLF). NACBO is a consortium of six family-led disability organisations across Australia who are committed to inclusion, choice, control, and empowerment. The project initially received a grant of \$999,900 (ex GST) in December 2020, with an additional \$718,000 (ex GST) in January 2022 to extend its activities for 18 months.

This project builds on previous work by NACBO that supported people with developmental disability and their families to explore the nature of home and living and create a vision of what this means to them. The current project addresses the next step of this process by building the confidence and capacity of people with developmental disability and their families to exercise choice and control over how, where and with whom they live. In line with ISL's "One Person at a Time" principle, the project focuses on individualised solutions tailored to each person's needs and aspirations. As such, the project employs part-time ILA Navigators to provide practical support, information, and leadership opportunities, aiming to increase participants' confidence and capacity to navigate the ILO process.

Appropriate home and living supports that build on and facilitate connections to family, friends, and the community are essential for the social, economic, and community inclusion of people with developmental disability. However, home and living options for people with developmental disability transitioning from the family home have traditionally been limited to group homes or other institutionalised settings that have long been criticised for their inherent limitations and risks. Group homes and other institutionalised settings offer impersonal, rigid, support governed by service provider priorities and limit opportunities for people with development disability to exercise choice and control over where, how, and with whom they live. As such, these arrangements make it impossible to provide person-centred, flexible, support that responds to individual needs and preferences and fosters authentic community inclusion. Moreover, numerous reports, including the Disability Royal Commission, have exposed neglect and abuse within institutionalised settings that fail to provide safety, dignity, and meaningful inclusion. This stands in stark contrast to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which recognises the right to independent living and inclusion in the community (Article 19).

The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real aims to address these issues by empowering people with developmental disability and their families to exercise choice and control over their home and living arrangements. Grounded in the ISL Framework and the principles of capacity building, the project supports people with developmental disability and their families to explore home and living options and develop personalised, inclusive, and sustainable individualised arrangements that meet their needs and preferences. This flexibility ensures that individuals can access resources from any suitable funding stream while remaining focused on their personal vision of home and community. By providing education, capacity building, and support, the project seeks to prevent the harm associated with institutionalised living and create pathways towards more personalised, inclusive, and safe housing solutions.

The NDIS Review (2023) highlights a significant gap in accessible information and support for navigating the ILO process. Moreover, the process of exploring, planning, and implementing ILAs is complex and time-consuming, often requiring sustained effort and skilled support. This project directly addresses these challenges by building the capacity and confidence of people with developmental disability and their families to move toward home and living arrangements that align with their aspirations. As such, the My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project supports a shift towards home and living solutions where people with developmental disability can thrive.

Project Aims

The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project aimed to empower people with developmental disability and their families by increasing their understanding of ILAs and building their confidence and capacity to navigate the process of developing and ILA. The ultimate goal of the project was to support people with developmental disability to move into their own ILA. The project's aim of empowering people with developmental disability meant that working alongside families and taking time to get to know each person's individual needs and preferences was crucial for this project. Navigating the process of exploring and developing an ILA includes developing a vision of home, exploring possible living arrangements, arranging supports (informal, formal, and mainstream) and accessing funding (including but not limited to NDIS ILO funding). The project focused building the confidence, skills, and technical knowledge needed to move towards ILAs that provide people with developmental disability with authentic choice and control over how, where, and with whom they live. Additionally, the project aimed to develop a scalable model for the provision of ILA Navigation services for people with developmental

disability and their families at a national level.

Objectives

The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase awareness and knowledge of home and living options and the process of developing and individualised living arrangement (ILA).
- Build the capacity and confidence of people with developmental disability and their families to explore home and living options and develop ILAs.
- Deepen understanding of funding options available for developing ILAs, including but not limited to NDIS ILO funding.
- Develop a scalable ILA navigation model based on the ISL Framework and capacity building principles.

Deliverables

To achieve the objectives of this project the following deliverables were set:

- Development and maintenance of a comprehensive step-by-step guide to understanding ILAs and navigating the NDIS ILO funding process (hosted online)
- Development and implementation of a train-the-trainer program to provide ILA mentors (referred to as ILA Navigators in this project) with the knowledge and skills needed to support people with developmental disability and their families to explore home and living options and navigate the process of developing an ILA.
- Development and implementation of an ILA navigation service that provides accessible information, skill building workshops, and 1:1 and group mentoring to people with developmental disability and their families to increase their confidence and capacity to develop an ILA.
- Development of a scalable ILA navigation model that can be used as a framework for supporting people with developmental disability and their families to explore home and living options and develop ILAs.

Long Term Outcomes

Meeting the objectives of the My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project will result in the following long-term outcomes:

- People with developmental disability to move into their own ILA
- People with developmental disability and their families have the knowledge, skills and confidence to advocate for the right to exercise choice and control over decisions made about their lives, including home and living arrangements.
- People with developmental disability and their families share their experiences of developing ILAs, strengthening peer networks and mentoring relationships.
- People with developmental disability and their families have the skills and confidence to engage in leadership roles and advocacy efforts within the broader community
- Collaboration between NACBO members is strengthened
- Policy and practice changes are made to promote ILO solutions for people with developmental disability.

Project Design

The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project is rooted in the principles of Social Role Valorisation (SRV), capacity building, human rights, and person-centred, strengths-based approaches to supporting people with developmental disability. These principles align with NACBO's belief that all people with disability are equal citizens with the right to participate in society through social and economic means and their commitment to inclusion, choice, and empowerment in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD). By supporting people with developmental disability to develop and realise their vision of home and the good life, this project challenges social expectations and fosters the social and economic participation of people with developmental disability. Moreover, this project recognises that capacity building activities are critical to enable people to explore the full range of living arrangement opportunities available to them.

The project is further informed by the Individualised Supported Living (ISL) Framework, which provides a practical, research-backed foundation for supporting people with developmental disability to create sustainable and meaningful home and living arrangements. The key principles underpinning the ISL Framework's include fostering growth and valued roles of (Thriving), and emphasising building connections and community participation (Social Inclusion) and these underpin the project's goals of

empowering people with developmental disability and their families to develop and implement their unique vision of home and living.

Capacity building activities during this project included supporting people with developmental disability and their families to access high- quality information, peer mentoring, and leadership opportunities. Capacity building activities were designed to increase the confidence and capacity of people with developmental disability and their families to:

- exercise choice and control
- define what a good life means to them
- build on their strengths
- problem-solve to identify areas of further skills development
- access the same opportunities as other people

These principles and values were central to the design and development of the project's three phases, outlined in the table below:

| Phase | Deliverable | Activities |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Development and maintenance of a comprehensive step-by-step guide to ILAs and the NDIS ILO funding process | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of resources for the ILO Toolkit website. The website hosts information and resources such as checklists, planning tools, and video showcasing ILA success stories.• The toolkit was designed by the project lead with feedback from 4-6 navigators who were working with people on to understand ILAs and NDIS ILO pathway.• Toolkit maintenance is ongoing and any changes to the NDIS ILO operational guidelines are updated on Toolkit |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | Development and implementation of a train-the-trainer ILA Navigator program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ILO Toolkit doubles as a training resource for ILA Navigators. • Additionally, monthly Community of Practice (CoP) meetings were held to support ILA Navigators to develop their collective knowledge, skills and stories, work through technical questions related to the NDIS ILO pathway, problem-solve, and share innovative ideas related to exploration and design of ILAs. • The Community of Practice also engaged in online meetings with the NDIA Home & Living Supports Branch, to ask technical questions related to the NDIS ILO pathway about NDIS ILO funding and provide feedback to the NDIA regarding the challenges in the funding process |
| 3 | Development and implementation of an ILA navigation service | <p>NACBO members employed 1 x part time project worker as an ILA navigator to work directly with people with disability and their families to explore and design ILAs.</p> <p>ILA Navigators provided people with disability and their families with access to resources and provided mentoring /coaching to people with developmental disability and their families both individually and in group workshops.</p> |
| 4 | Development of a scalable ILA navigation model | Collaboration between ILA Navigators and NACBO partner CEOs to develop a framework for ILA Navigation based on the project's learnings |

Note: This project was developed with the intention of engaging a co-design group that included people with developmental disability, family members and supports to provide leadership and guidance however the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in changes being made to the co-design aspect of the project. To accommodate the impact of COVID, ILA navigators with lived experience of disability acted as an informal co-design group.

Sophie's journey to independence

For Sophie, a woman with disability in her late 20s, the dream of living in her own home had for a long time seemed out of reach. While her family supported her aspirations, the path forward was unclear.

The family had considered the self-contained flat beneath the family home as a potential first step for Sophie to start trying to live more independently. However, they weren't sure how to find suitable support to help Sophie with daily tasks, and knew they wanted to help Sophie expand her network. The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real Project (the Project) discussed what might be possible with Sophie and her family. . With the guidance of a Project navigator, they embarked on a journey that changed their understanding of support and companionship and how this might be provided as an important part of Sophie's home.

The navigator suggested finding a supportive housemate for Sophie, someone who didn't have a disability, who could provide support and offer connection. Encouraged and informed by stories of others who had successfully set up similar living arrangements, Sophie and her family created an advertisement in the hope of taking a step to realising Sophie's dream for the future.



Their ad was answered by Tara, a young woman around Sophie's age, who was keen to be both a supportive and enabling presence for Sophie, and to co-create a social and supportive home. Although the relationship between Sophie and Tara took time to develop, it was nurtured by mutual respect, and they soon grew to be good friends as well as housemates. Sophie enjoyed spending time with Tara – together, they would go out for coffee, do puzzles and watch movies.

Tara's presence brought more than companionship, it also instilled confidence in Sophie. . Now, knowing that Tara was nearby, both Sophie and her parents felt confident for Sophie to stay in the family home when they were away,

The project was instrumental in supporting the confidence of Sophie and her family around the idea of a supportive housemate, and in Sophie's broader journey to living independently. By thinking beyond traditional support models and supporting and guiding people with disability and families through options in detail, people with a range of disabilities are able to realise their dreams for an ordinary home.

Evaluation Overview

Evaluation Purpose and Approach

Recipients of Department of Social Services Information, Linkages, and Capacity Building funding are required to conduct a project evaluation. As such, ongoing project monitoring and evaluation were conducted throughout the My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project.

The purpose of this end of project evaluation report is to document the impact of the My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project. Data from surveys, interviews, and feedback collected throughout the project has been analysed to assess the project's outcomes, highlight key findings, and make recommendations for increasing the capacity of people with developmental disability and their families to explore home and living options and navigate the process of developing an ILA. The focus of the evaluation is to:

1. Assess the impact of program participation on the confidence and capacity of people with developmental disability and their families
2. Identify what lessons were learned about the process of developing an ILA during this project

The evaluation considers:

- Project process and implementation to determine if the project operated as planned and what changes were made in response to ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- Project outcomes to assess the extent to which the project achieved its objectives
- Project impact to identify the impact of the project on people with developmental disability and their families, ILO navigators and external systems in relation to ILO arrangements.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation aims to address the following questions:

- Did the project operate as planned
 - What were the barriers to project implementation?
 - What changes were made to the project in response to ongoing monitoring and evaluation?
- What impact did engagement in this project have on the confidence and capacity of people with developmental disability and their families to explore home and living options and navigate the process of developing an ILA?

- Did the project lead to any other impacts or outcomes?
- What barriers to exploring home and living options and developing an ILA do people with developmental disability and their families face?
- What knowledge and skills are needed to support people with developmental disability and their families to explore home and living options and navigate the process of developing an ILA?

Logic Model

The program logic model informing this evaluation is illustrated below:

| Problem Statement | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ILAs provide an alternative to group homes and congregate living for people with disability that are based on the principles of choice and control. Developing an ILO solution involves providing people with disability with support to make decisions about their living arrangements, including who they live with, what supports they need, and what the community they live in. The process of exploring, planning, and implementing ILAs is complex and therefore people with disability and their families need support to build their confidence and capacity to explore home and living options and navigate the process of developing an ILA | | | | |
| Inputs | Outputs (Activities) | Short-term outcomes | Medium-term outcomes | Long-term outcomes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILC grant funding • Project workers • Knowledge and expertise • NACBO partner organisations | <p>Build people's capacity to problem solve and build skills that support them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore • Vision • Plan <p>ILO solutions</p> <p>By providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resources • consultation • coaching and mentoring • information sessions • peer group connections | <p>Increased awareness and knowledge about ILAs among people with disability families, and allies.</p> <p>Enhanced self-advocacy skills and confidence between people with disability and their families leading to greater input into home and living options and decision-making.</p> <p>Amplification of capacity-building activities through increased collaboration between NACBO members</p> | <p>People with disability and their families are empowered to engage in leadership roles and advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Strengthened peer networks and mentoring relationships providing ongoing support and shared experiences.</p> | <p>Influence policies and practices that prioritise ILAs for people with disability.</p> <p>People with disability move into their own ILA</p> |

Evaluation Process

Data Collection Methods

The evaluation of the My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project utilised a mixed-methods approach, including activity recording, surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and story collection. Data were systematically gathered from project workers, people with developmental disability and their families to capture the full range of experiences and insights regarding the ILA process. All data were securely stored on an MS Teams folder within Valued Lives' secure drive, accessible only to NACBO consortium members and grant-employed staff (navigators and mentors).

Activity Recording: Activity recording involved the documentation of interactions between project workers and people with developmental disability, families, supporters and service providers. Contact took the form of direct ILA exploration work, attending webinars, workshops, peer groups and disability expos. Each contact was logged in a Stats Data sheet stored in Teams, allowing for real-time tracking of the project's engagement with participants. This data provided quantitative insights into the frequency and nature of support provided by ILA Navigators.

Surveys: Surveys were conducted at two intervals during the project (July 2023 and May 2024) to gather feedback from people with developmental disability and their families who have been engaged with the project on an ongoing basis. Each NACBO partner identified three individuals or families they had supported, resulting in a sample size of 18 participants. To ensure anonymity and impartiality, surveys were conducted by a project worker from a different state than the participants, with survey responses recorded in a Word document template. The collected data were collated and analysed to contribute to the project evaluation. Surveys explored participants' experiences, the support they accessed, and the information they received throughout the project.

Interviews: During the collection of survey responses, structured interviews were conducted using open-ended survey questions. Responses captured detailed qualitative data, including participants' experiences of exploring home and living options, the challenges encountered to developing an ILA, and the outcomes achieved. This process allowed for a deeper understanding of individual journeys, providing rich context to the quantitative survey data.

Focus Group Discussions: Monthly Community of Practice meetings with ILA Navigators

served as focus group discussions, where navigators shared their experiences and feedback on supporting individuals through the ILO process. These discussions addressed key topics such as services provided, barriers to implementing ILAs, and the most significant changes observed in participants' confidence and decision-making.

Story Collection: Project workers collected “stories of change” throughout the project. Each story documented a participant’s journey, from their initial idea of moving out of home to accessing supports, developing a vision, and taking steps toward their implementing an ILO. Stories highlighted challenges, barriers, and how these were overcome, as well as feedback on participants' increased confidence and changes over time. This qualitative data provided narrative examples of how the project supported individuals in realising their goals.

Data gathered through these methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact, capturing both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. A copy of the data collection framework can be found in appendix B.

Data Analysis Methods

Data collected during the My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project was assessed against the project’s objectives and deliverables throughout the project by NACBO CEO’s and project workers. This process informed ongoing project monitoring and reporting. For the end of project evaluation report, data analysis was revisited and focused on:

- **Tracking Key Metrics:** We recorded the number of participants reporting increased confidence and capacity to navigate the ILO process and progression towards implementing an ILO
- **Identifying Common Themes:** We reviewed interview and survey responses for recurring themes, such as common barriers, challenges, or positive experiences.
- **Highlighting Key Stories:** Stories of change from participants were reviewed to showcase the most impactful outcomes of the project.

Lauren's path to healing and independence



At 34 years of age, Lauren, a woman with complex disabilities, including an intellectual disability and non-verbal communication, found herself back in her mother's care after experiencing severe neglect while living in a group home.

Determined to create a better future for Lauren, her family turned to the My Home My Design – Making ILO Real Project (the project). This marked the beginning of a 13-month journey that would redefine Lauren's life and her family's perspective on what was possible for her future. .

The ILO project navigator became an ally, guiding the family through the complexities of the ILO process. Through a series of comprehensive exploratory discussions and assessments the project navigator supported Lauren's family to ascertain Lauren's and her family's needs, preferences and aspirations.

These conversations helped shift the focus to envisioning what a meaningful and inclusive life could look like outside a traditional group home model.

The ILO project navigator's expertise shone through as they worked closely with Lauren's family and therapy team to provide invaluable psychoeducation on communication, and behaviour. Together they focused on understanding and gradually reducing Lauren's challenging behaviours while supporting her increased engagement with her local community.

Over the course of 13 months Lauren's family noticed a significant learning curve and an increase in confidence, feeling empowered to advocate for a living arrangement that is tailored to Lauren's unique needs.

Lauren's family now with more knowledge and support, feel confident to actively move forward with plans to pursue a Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), tailored to suit and meet Lauren's needs, a home where she can thrive, and continue her journey towards her unique individualised living arrangement that fosters safety, stability and community inclusion.

Findings

The data collected during the My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project highlighted several key themes related to participant experiences, challenges, and the overall impact of the program. A copy of the quantitative data collected can be found in appendix C. Data analysis found that the project successfully increased participants' knowledge and confidence in pursuing individualised living arrangements, while also highlighting key challenges, including housing availability, systemic barriers, and the need for peer connections. Ongoing support from project workers and the focus on capacity building were essential in helping people with disability and families navigate the complex ILO pathway and achieve positive outcomes. These findings are discussed in relation to the evaluation questions below.

Did the Project Operate as Planned?

The findings in this section were guided by the following sub-questions:

- Was the expected level of participation and engagement achieved?
- What were the barriers to project implementation?
- What changes were made to the project in response to ongoing monitoring and evaluation?

Overall, the project operated as planned and achieved its objectives of:

- increasing awareness of and knowledge about home and living options and navigating the process of developing an ILA
- building the capacity and confidence of people with developmental disability and their families to explore, plan, and work towards implementing an ILA
- deepening knowledge and understanding of NDIS ILO funding and other funding options
- developing a scalable ILA navigation model, consistent with capacity building principles and the NACBO capacity-building model (discussed further in Lessons Learned).

These objectives were achieved by successfully meeting the project deliverables outlined in the grant application (development of an ILO guide, ILA navigator training program via the CoP and ILA navigation service). The level of engagement in the project was generally high, however the onset of COVID-19 temporarily effected participation and engagement in the project.

In total, 6,161 people with developmental disability, families, supporters, service providers and others engaged with the project. This is made up of:

- 1:1 consultation, mentoring and coaching:
 - People with developmental disability: 359
 - Families: 699
 - Service providers: 235
- ILO Toolkit: 3,928 unique visitors since it was launched in 2023
- Workshops/webinars/Expos: 532 participants
- Home Peer groups: 408 participants

Nevertheless, several barriers to project implementation were identified, particularly in relation to staff capacity, clarity around NDIA funding processes, and external factors such as COVID-19. These are discussed below:

Staff Capacity: The short-term nature of the ILC (Information, Linkages, and Capacity Building) grant cycles made it difficult to recruit and retain staff. This constraint directly affected the project's capacity to meet the ongoing needs of participants. Additionally, funding was only received for part-time ILA Navigators which constrained the number of people navigators could work with. Many respondents indicated they would benefit from increased staff availability, especially as many felt overwhelmed by the complexity of the ILO process. As one participant said, *"More hours of the project worker! Full-time worker instead of part-time worker."*

Barriers to Accessing Information: The lack of clarity from the NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency) around the Funding of LA pathways was a critical challenge for the organisation. Project staff, including ILA Navigators, struggled to stay updated on the evolving guidelines, review recommendations, and changing NDIA processes, creating a sense of uncertainty for both participants and staff. One ILA Navigator described the difficulty: *"The biggest challenge was lack of clarity around the requirements of the ILO pathway from the NDIA, including guidance around evidence. Even as navigators, we struggled to have the information and clarity we needed to guide families."* Another noted, *"Keeping up with the changes to Operational Guidelines, NDIS review recommendations, and the general 'word on the ground' was difficult at times."*

COVID-19: The COVID-19 pandemic had a notable impact on the project, particularly in terms of its co-design element. The project had planned to involve people with developmental disability and their families in co-designing a Technical Guide resource,

but lockdowns and restrictions severely limited face-to-face meetings, which were essential to this process. As a result, a critical aspect of the project was delayed. In response to the limitations caused by COVID-19, more webinars were offered in place of face-to-face sessions. Although this allowed for greater accessibility, some participants still expressed a desire for more direct interaction, with one suggestion being: *“Face-to-face interactions...would be helpful.”* In addition, ILA Navigators with lived experience of disability were employed to meet the co-design aspect of the project.

Impact on People with Developmental Disability and their Families

Engaging in this project had a significant positive impact, increasing the confidence and capacity of people with disability and their families to explore home and living options and navigate the process of developing an ILA.

Improved Understanding: In both 2023 and 2024, all survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they received new information that they could understand. This reflects the success of the project in delivering accessible information that people with developmental disability and their families could easily comprehend.

Increased Knowledge: In 2023, 90% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had increased knowledge of the various ways to set up an ILO. Similarly, in 2024, 85% respondents reported increased knowledge of these processes. This highlights the project's effectiveness in building participants' understanding of ILAs.

Confidence in Navigation: In 2023, 90% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident navigating the steps to set up an ILA. In 2024, 70% of respondents reported increased confidence. This shows a measurable increase in the ability of people with developmental disability and their families to confidently navigate the process of developing an ILA, further underscored by their engagement in taking steps toward implementation.

Implementation: 70% of respondents in 2023 and 79% of respondents in 2024 had already commenced development of an ILA, demonstrating that the project encouraged participants to act on their increased knowledge and confidence.

The project helped families to create a vision for home and living for their loved ones. This gave participants the confidence to explore ILAs with a clearer idea of what was possible. One participant reflected, *“I know about what ‘home’ can mean now... I have more choices, it’s still a difficult system to understand but I have options for my son.”*

Participants noted that the workshops, webinars, and ongoing support provided by the ILA Navigator significantly contributed to their confidence. One participant shared, *"The content was fantastic. I feel more confident in the process and possibilities of ILO funding."* The continuous access to information broken down into simpler terms helped alleviate concerns, with one participant commenting, *"Info from the Navigator was easy to understand... It was fantastic to see that other families had made it a success."*

Overall, the project had a positive and lasting impact on the capacity of people with disability and their families to explore home and living options and navigate the process of developing an ILA. It provided much-needed support, resources, and confidence to pursue individualised living arrangements. The step-by-step guidance and peer-led examples enabled many participants to feel empowered to move forward, with some describing the project as "life-changing" and "like a lifeline."

Other Impacts and Outcomes

The evaluation of the project indicates several additional impacts and outcomes that extend beyond the immediate objectives emotional support, empowerment, and the development of a broader vision for individualised living were key successes of the project.

Beyond the immediate focus on ILA development and implementation, the project fostered significant emotional and psychological outcomes for participants with one commenting that engaging in the project was an *"incredible experience – I had lost hope that I was going to be safe and live in a safe home – feel like doors have been open again and believe it is possible – very grateful – no other providers out there like this company."* One participant reflected that the experience was *"life-changing,"* while another mentioned feeling like the project was a *"lifeline."* Emotional impacts such as these were consistently highlighted in the qualitative data, reinforcing the idea that the project not only helped with practical knowledge but also offered mental and emotional support.

In addition, the qualitative data consistently highlighted the importance of peer interactions and community support. Participants valued the connections and resources facilitated by the project. Interaction with peer groups, access to workshops, and connections with other families who had gone through similar processes were highly

beneficial. Multiple participants noted that connecting with others who had experience developing an ILA was vital in building their confidence and understanding. As one participant shared, *"It was so powerful because it was talking to someone who had done it. It was the granular detail."* The ability to share experiences and learn from others' journeys helped participants see that setting up an ILA was achievable, even for those with complex needs.

A crucial additional outcome was the long-term mindset shift participants experienced regarding what was possible for home and living. As one participant described, *"I know about what 'home' can mean now, I have more choices."* This shift in thinking about alternatives to group homes represents a deep and lasting impact of the project. Participants now feel empowered to explore a broader range of living options, reflecting an expanded view of inclusion and independence.

Barriers to Exploring and Developing ILAs for People with Developmental Disability and their Families

The data from surveys conducted in 2023 and 2024, alongside qualitative responses from participants, reveal several barriers that people with developmental disability and their families face when attempting to develop and implement ILAs. These barriers span a variety of issues, including funding, lack of housing options, and the complexity of navigating NDIS ILO funding.

Housing Affordability, Availability and Suitability: Access to suitable and affordable housing tailored to the needs of people with developmental disability was a significant barrier. Even when participants understood the ILA model and were interested in pursuing it, the scarcity of suitable housing that was both financially affordable and met their accessibility needs made it difficult to put plans into action. Participants highlighted the difficulty in finding housing that matched their specific requirements, both in the private rental market and through public housing options. This issue is amplified by extremely low employment rates among people with developmental disability. As one respondent pointed out: *"Securing housing and lack of suitable housing – rentals, public housing or for purchasing, as well as ensuring it's financially sustainable."* The lack of affordable housing was also noted as a major factor for many people with developmental disability from lower socio-economic backgrounds. *"Society has not yet come up with ways in which they can live properly in the community, when they don't have families who can afford options."*

Perceived Safeguarding Concerns: Perceived safeguarding concerns were another substantial barrier, with families expressing concern about the long-term safety and wellbeing of their family members living in an ILA. Prior to engaging with the project, many participants were unsure how to implement effective safeguards or ensure these were maintained over time. A participant voiced their worries: *“I am thinking about safety and safeguarding, I need to know more before we can go ahead with any changes.”* Another participant highlighted the emotional challenge of future planning: *“How do we ensure the arrangement continues once we are not here?”*. To address these concerns, ILA Navigators facilitated conversations with families to design effective and practical strategies that addressed these concerns

Complexity of NDIS Funding Systems and Processes: A major barrier to implementing an ILA is the complexity of the NDIS ILO funding pathway. Families often feel overwhelmed by NDIS requirements, paperwork, and uncertainty of long-term funding. One participant noted: *“The amount of reporting we have had to do multiple times, to prove need to the NDIS [was a big barrier].”* Another stated: *“NDIS systems create barriers. The paperwork and processes for applications for home and living support are confusing and difficult to understand. There are also lengthy delays once paperwork is submitted.”* Additionally, families expressed concern about the sustainability of NDIS funding over time, particularly in relation to changing NDIS policies, which added further anxiety to the process. A participant reflected: *“I am concerned about funding security going forward... and that anything we put in place may change if ILO funding guidelines change.”*

Lack of Service Provider Knowledge of ILAs: Participants felt that service providers and support coordinators often lacked sufficient knowledge of ILAs, further complicating the process. Service providers tended to promote traditional home and living arrangements, such as SIL or SDA, as they were more familiar with these models. Service providers need support to recognise how ILAs differ from traditional home and living options and to understand the benefits they provide. A participant described this frustration: *“Our support coordinator had us looking at more traditional options first... it was tough to not have [them] behind the vision for my son’s life.”*

Information Overwhelm: Families often felt overwhelmed by the vast amount of information and decisions required. The complexity of navigating the process of developing and implementing an ILA without support led to significant anxiety and uncertainty. A participant stated: *“I feel overwhelmed by the seeming complexities and sheer workload of navigating the pathway going forward.”*

Impact of COVID-19: The ongoing impact of COVID-19 was also a barrier for many families. The pandemic created uncertainty about health, safety, and housing, which delayed the ILO process for some participants. One participant explained: *“The short and long-term uncertainty of the pandemic impacted our ability to move forward with ILO.”*

While this project provided participants with valuable information and increased confidence, the process of developing and implementing ILAs remains fraught with challenges. Participants and their families face barriers related to perceived safeguarding concerns, housing shortages, complex funding requirements, and limited support networks. Overcoming these obstacles requires a holistic and sustained approach, including the provision of consistent support, access to affordable housing, and the development of a network of peer mentors with experience implementing ILAs.

Knowledge and Skills Needed to Support People with Developmental Disability and their Families to Explore and Implement ILAs

The ILA Navigator’s role was distinct from the role of specialist support coordinators as it extended beyond providing information about home and living options. They also supported people with developmental disability and their families to develop their confidence and capacity to navigate social and systemic barriers to implementing ILAs and facilitated peer support. Navigators needed a wide range of knowledge and skills, including comprehensive understanding of home and living options, technical understanding of NDIS processes, and the ability to provide emotional and practical

support for people with developmental disability and their families. An in-depth knowledge of the Individualised Supported Living (ISL) Framework was also essential. Moreover, the project's aim of empowering people with developmental disability means that focusing on one person at a time is crucial, and ILA Navigators needed to invest a significant amount of time working alongside people with developmental disability and their families, getting to know each person's individual needs and preferences over time.

To be successful in the role, ILA Navigators need a comprehensive understanding of home and living options and the specific steps involved in navigating the process of developing an ILA. As such, knowledge and understanding of applying the ISL Framework principles to support the exploration, development, and implementation of ILAs is essential. ILA Navigators also need to stay up to date on home and living options, the process of implementing an ILA, and funding guidelines and processes, and have comprehensive knowledge of community resources and mainstream services. Additionally, ILA Navigators need to provide information in an accessible format: *"Info from the Navigator was easy to understand. My Home My Way resources and website were great"*. Therefore, ILA Navigators need to be able to break down complex information for families and people with developmental disability.

ILA Navigators play a crucial role in building confidence, as one participant explained, *"I feel overwhelmed by the seeming complexities and sheer workload of navigating the pathway"*. As such, ILA Navigators need to be skilled in supporting people with developmental disability and their families to feel empowered and heard by facilitating challenging conversations and building supported decision-making and self-advocacy skills. One participant commented that *"It was so powerful because it was talking to someone who had done it. It was the granular detail."* Providing real-life examples or ILA success stories and facilitating connections with peer mentors who have gone through similar journeys is an important part of this. As one ILA Navigator commented, *"I've been asked many times, people are wanting to connect with others who have been on a similar journey"*. As such, ILA Navigators need to create opportunities for participants to build a network of people with lived experience of developing ILAs so they can learn from their shared knowledge and experience.

A holistic understanding of each person's needs and how these intersect with their home and living arrangements is vital for success. ILA Navigators should ensure all aspects of a person's life are considered when developing an ILA - from housing needs and supports, to informal networks and long-term safeguarding. ILA Navigators should also be skilled in

identifying and addressing systemic barriers and practical challenges faced by families, such as issues with NDIS funding, housing availability, and securing long-term support. . As one participant shared *“We have to think not just about the house but the surrounds and what can cause stressful situations.”* Another noted, *“Our daughter’s Support Coordinator has been attending the meetings along with the Project worker ... this meant that all areas of her life could be looked at, including financial, behavioural.”*

Nathan's story



The COVID-19 pandemic had left Nathan feeling isolated and disconnected; his world shrunk to the confines of Zoom-based day services. Nathan was unsure about the idea of moving out of his family home and didn't feel ready, but he was seeking more in his life. He wanted to try new things, especially related to his passions for yoga, gardening and cooking!

In the course of a series of conversations and brainstorming sessions with Nathan and his Mum, Kate, the Project navigator encouraged everyone to start with Nathan's passions, interests, gifts, skills and aspirations, as key starting points to nurture his independence and connection to community.

Nathan and his family were encouraged to find someone who could support Nathan and also had skills and passion in one or two of his areas of interest. Through his personal and family networks, Nathan and Kate were able to find a mentor, Antonio – a professional chef, who shared Nathan's culinary passion. With this guidance, Nathan has expanded on his cooking skills, experiences and confidence.

Together, they planned small dinner parties for Nathan's family, and building on the success of each event, Nathan started thinking about how he might host gatherings in his own home one day.

The Project navigator also helped Nathan to find a local yoga studio where he could attend face-to-face classes. This connection would not only nurture Nathan's physical well-being but would help him weave into the fabric of his community, fostering new relationships and a sense of belonging. Another

avenue for Nathan's growth was technology. He began working with a personal assistant, who supported him in building his digital skills and to take a more active role in organising and making choices about his day-to-day life.

While Nathan wasn't ready for an immediate move to his own home, these new experiences, as well as conversations and reflections with Nathan and his family through the support of the project, brought him closer to that goal. The project's flexible approach, which focuses on the unique gifts and needs of each person, allowed Nathan to progress at his own pace, building confidence and competence in areas that truly mattered to him, and working to bring him into connection with others in the community. Nathan's journey illustrates the power of community-based support in fostering independence. By tapping into Nathan's interests and gradually expanding his skills and social connections, the project has set Nathan on a path to a more independent future.

Post-script: Nathan is now attending Latin Dancing classes in his local community - he absolutely loves it and the anticipation of putting on his dance shoes and dancing with others. He is upbeat after classes and is starting to connect with other dancers. Nathan's most common comment is "I love dancing!"

He is also now part of a drumming studio. An amazing space where he likes to play fast and loud, including African Djembe drum, Nickelback and Paul Kelly songs.

Nathan has also recently started at a local yoga studio, where he dived into lots of trial classes. He says, "I feel calm, I feel happy. I like yoga."

Lessons Learned

The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project led to several key insights into the process of exploring, developing, and implementing ILAs and how people with developmental disability and their families can be supported to build their confidence and capacity to navigate this process. These are discussed below:

Positive Impact of Support: Participants highlighted the support received through the project was informative, inspirational, uplifting, enabling, and confidence-building. Many participants gained not only information but also the confidence to move forward with planning their own living arrangements. One ILA Navigator described the transformative impact on a participant: *“The biggest change has been in G’s level of confidence in expressing his ideas and preferences for a home of his own. He has also built a range of contacts, knowledge and skills that he will be able to use as his planning moves forward”.*

Time-Intensive Nature of Exploring, Developing, and Implementing an ILA: The ILA process is not quick, taking anywhere from one to five plus years. Participants recognised that success requires careful planning and patience. *“You can’t do this quickly, if you do it quickly it won’t work out. Must be prepared that this won’t go quickly. This is a massive project.”* This understanding of the time required reflects the importance of setting realistic expectations and being prepared for the long journey involved.

Value of Lived Experience and Peer Support: Participants found peer support from someone with lived experience particularly valuable. Hearing directly from those who had navigated the process helped families feel supported and better equipped to tackle their own concerns. *“It was so powerful because it was talking to someone who had done it.”*

Holistic Approach is Essential: The ILA process involves addressing many interconnected aspects of life. Working with families is crucial when building the capacity of people with developmental disability and ILA Navigators adopted a holistic, collaborative approach involving key workers, families, and support coordinators. *“This meant that all areas of her life could be looked at, including financial, behavioural... in a way that we wouldn’t have been able to do if we were separately negotiating with all the individuals at different times.”*

Importance of Informal, Formal and Mainstream Supports: Participants expressed the need for both formal paid supports as well as informal and mainstream supports to

ensure ILAs are sustainable. One participant emphasised the importance of *“Building people around her that she really needs, doing the right thing for her at the right time”*. Another noted the importance of “encouraging and building natural relationships. This is in line with the recommendation of the NDIS review to develop a connected system that draws on accessible and inclusive mainstream services and facilitates connections between people with disability and the families to peers, friends, and the wider community.

Significance of a Free Service: One of the most appreciated aspects of the project was that the ILA navigation service was provided free of charge, removing a significant financial burden from families. *“A very positive aspect of the Project is that it’s a free service. Parents and people are always asking ‘how much can I afford?’. It’s a burden for overstretched families.”* This was particularly important because few people with disability have funding for ILA exploration and development. By providing a free ILA navigation service, the project provided people with developmental disability and their families with unrestricted access to crucial information about alternative home and living arrangements and connected them to resources, and mentoring support that might otherwise be unavailable.

Access to a free ILA navigation service that does not require NDIS funding or require an ongoing commitment can significantly impact the choices people with developmental disability and families make regarding their home and living options. This was appreciated by many participants: *“The fact Belonging Matters was a free service gave me an incredible sense of trust as it wasn’t a business transaction as is the case with other NDIS service providers. (The Navigator) was just there doing what she does so expertly taking families through this process”*

Usefulness of Resources: Tools such as the ILO Toolkit and the My Home My Way website, particularly the videos, were highly regarded by both participants and ILA Navigators. These resources increased understanding of the options and processes involved in ILO. *“The ILO toolkit and the My Home My Way websites have been very useful to increase my understanding of the options and processes.”*

Ongoing Funding and Support is Needed: Participants noted that the developing an ILA is not a linear, one-time solution. Individual circumstances and needs change over time and therefore ongoing engagement between ILA Navigators and families is essential. This is further complicated by uncertainties around the future of ILO funding. More information on navigating funding cuts or other obstacles would be beneficial. *“We also need more information as to how to*

navigate when roadblocks come up. E.g., my son's plan was cut". This is supported by the recommendation made in the NDIS review for ongoing support from general and specialist navigators.

Recommendations

The process of visioning, planning, developing, and implementing an ILA is complex and time-consuming. Investing time to understand the needs and preferences of people with developmental disability by working alongside families is essential. Moreover, people with developmental disability and their families require ongoing, long-term guidance to adapt to changes in both their needs and funding options. To support people with developmental disability and their families to explore and develop ILAs the following recommendations are made

- **Establish a Permanent, Free ILA Navigation Service:** Guidance and support for people with developmental disability and their families to explore and implement ILAs must be long-term, free of charge, and independent of funding (both individual NDIS funding and short-term project funding) and service provision. A permanent, government-supported ILA navigation service is critical to ensure people with developmental disability and their families receive continuous, stable support to plan and implement their living arrangements. This will provide consistency and security, ensuring people can fully engage with the process without fear of service interruptions due to funding cycles.
- **Provide Personalised, Holistic Guidance:** An ILA Navigation service should offer comprehensive, ongoing assistance that addresses all stages of the ILA journey, from initial visioning to long-term support arrangements. Support to explore different home and living options, navigate complex funding pathways, and build community networks, is essential.
- **Invest in Long-Term Engagement:** The process of setting up an ILA often takes years, not months. Support should not only cover the immediate needs of the individual but also provide long-term guidance to navigate changing circumstances, ensuring people with developmental disability can thrive in their chosen home and living arrangement over time.

Additionally, it is recommended that future ILO navigation services implement the following changes:

- **Facilitate Peer Connections:** Participants valued in-person meetings and wanted more opportunities to connect with people who had experience exploring, navigating the process of exploring and developing ILAs: *“Face-to-face interactions and hearing more stories from people who have been through the ILO journey would help.”*
- **Increase the Knowledge and Understanding of Service Providers:** There is a need for better awareness and understanding of ILAs within the broader disability sector, particularly among support coordinators. Families noted that it would be beneficial to people with disability and families for ILA Navigators to have “Increased outreach within the disability sector, to ensure Support Coordinators are well informed in ILO”. As many people with disability have Support Coordination included in their NDIS plan, having informed and knowledgeable Support Coordinators would ensure people with disability and families have increased access to information about ILAs, positively impacting the choices they make about their living arrangements.
- **Additional Support and Guidance for People with Limited Informal Supports is Needed:** Families requested more comprehensive information and guidance on developing and implementing an ILA when they have limited informal support networks.

These recommendations are vital for ensuring all people with developmental disability have the opportunity to pursue meaningful, self-directed, and sustainable home and living arrangements

Scalable ILA Navigation Service Model

The lessons learned during the My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project indicate that people with developmental disability and their families are seeking skilled support to build their confidence and capacity to explore home and living options and navigate the process of developing an ILA.

People with developmental disability and their families need support to:

- Develop their knowledge and understanding of different home and living options
- Develop a vision of home and living that reflects their needs and preferences.
- Build informal networks and connections in the community.
- Develop their capacity to advocate for their vision and safeguard their ILA over

the long-term

- Connect to peers who have experience with the ILA process, to learn from their experiences.

These findings are in line with the recommendations of the NDIS Review (2023), which called for a specialist home and living navigation service for people with disability and their families to be established. The NDIS review emphasises that people with disability should be able to choose from a diverse and flexible range of home and living options that offer greater choice and control. The review also recommends that navigators with in-depth knowledge and understanding of home and living options are employed to support people with disability to develop goals, explore their options, and secure funding for ILAs..

The lessons learned from this project led to the development of a scalable ILA Navigation Service framework, ILA navigation process model. These are discussed below.

ILA Navigation Services Framework

Service Principles:

ILA Navigation Services should be built on the following principles:

- **Co-Design:** Services should be collaboratively designed with people with disability and their families.
- **Human Rights and SRV Principles:** Ensure all services adhere to human rights standards and Social Role Valorisation (SRV) principles.
- **Typical and Ordinary Focus:** Emphasise everyday life and natural living arrangements, prioritising the individual's vision of a thriving life over available funding.
- **Person-centred:** one person at a time, each person's needs are unique, what is explored and designed comes from getting to know the person and their supporters well. The person remains at the centre of all exploration and design.
- **Capacity Building:** Support people with disability and families to:
 - Enhance their understanding home and living options and the process developing and implementing ILAs
 - Explore what home and living means to them.
 - Plan, develop and implement ILAs effectively.
 - Ensure safeguards are in place to support the sustainability of their ILA.
 - Move beyond paid support to engage informal and mainstream support and increase community and social inclusion.
 - Build confidence and self-advocacy skills.

ILA Navigation Service Menu:

The following are suggested services that can be offered within the ILA Navigation framework. These are not prescriptive. The actual services provided should be tailored to the needs of local context and individual participants

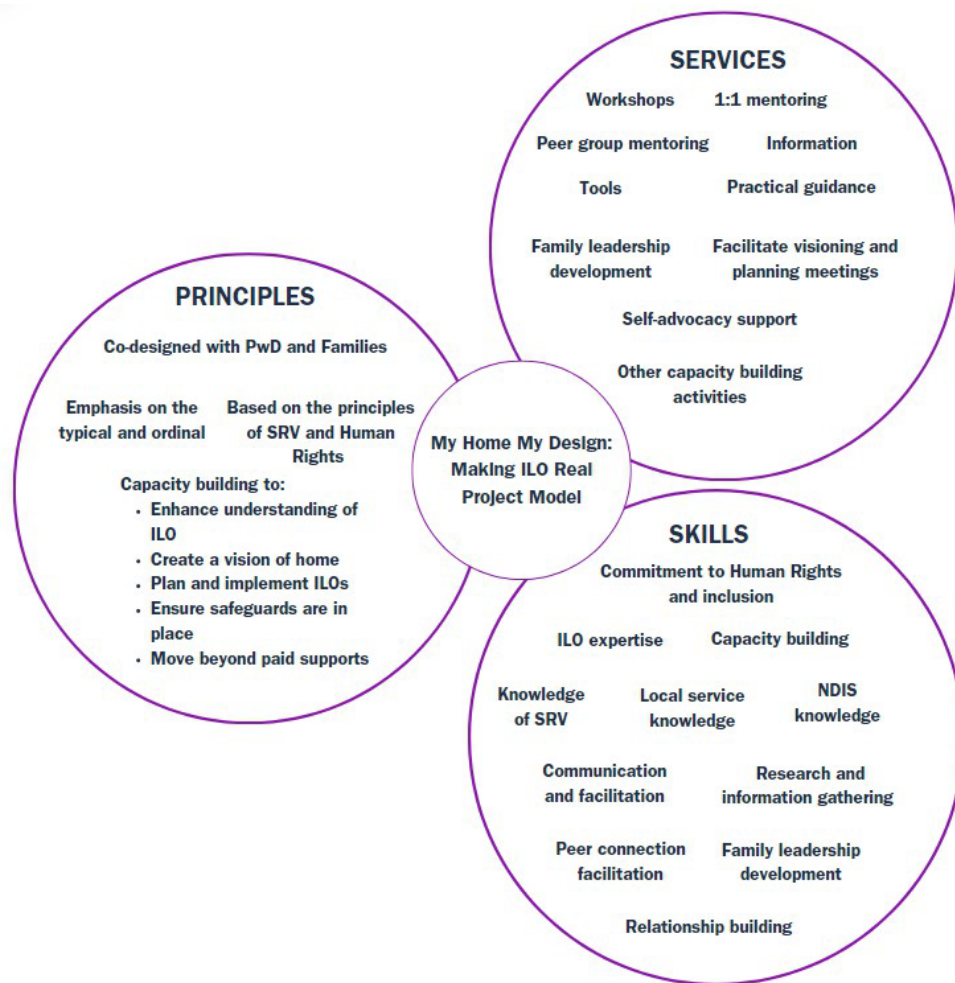
- **Capacity Building Activities:** Provide workshops, mentoring, and peer groups etc.
- **Information and Resources:** Offer information and tools to guide people through the ILA process.
- **Practical Guidance:** Provide mentoring on how to turn a vision into reality.
- **Facilitation:** Facilitate visioning and planning meetings to support the developed of a personalised vision of home and living.
- **Family Leadership Development:** Build family leadership by increasing the knowledge and skills of family members
- **Self-Advocacy Development:** Provide guidance and support on how to advocate for their needs and preferences and build their capacity to self-advocate for their preferred ILO arrangement.

ILA Navigator Competencies:

The following are core competencies necessary for ILA Navigators

- **Human Rights and Inclusion:** Alignment with the principles of human rights, citizenship, and inclusion.
- **ISL Framework, SRV and Capacity Building:** Knowledge of the ISL Framework, SRV and effective capacity building strategies.
- **Relationship Building:** Skilled in building relationships and networks.
- **Communication and Facilitation:** Strong communication, planning, and facilitation abilities.
- **Information Gathering:** Skilled in collating and applying relevant information.
- **Local Services Knowledge:** Understand and connect with local specialist and mainstream services.
- **Home and Living Options Expertise:** Knowledge of historical and contemporary home and living options for people with disability.
- **NDIS and Funding:** Familiarity with the NDIS system and other relevant funding options.
- **Holistic Approach:** Comprehensive understanding of how various systems (health, housing, justice, disability) intersect to impact people with disability.

- **Family Leadership:** Understanding of family leadership and how this can be developed.
- **Peer Connections:** Skilled in facilitating connections to peers with experience of the ILA process



ILA Navigation Process Model

Throughout this project, the following were identified as common steps in navigating the ILA process. However, it is important to recognise that the ILA process is an intentional and carefully considered process that focuses on one person at a time. As such, the process is unique for everyone. Therefore:

- These steps are non-linear and iterative – navigating the ILA process may involve completing steps more than once or not at all
- Not everyone will start the ILA journey at the same point ILA Navigators need to meet participants where they are at and allow the process to evolve organically over time

Change: This initial phase involves recognising the desire for a change in a person's home and living situation. The person with disability and their family expresses a wish to explore new living arrangements or move out of home. They may seek information and support to understand how this transition could be achieved.

Exploration: In this phase, the person or family engages with an ILA Navigator to explore options and gather information. This may include attending workshops, webinars, or peer groups, and using supported decision-making principles. The focus is on discovering *ideas and learning from others' experiences*.

Visioning: Here, the focus is on defining what a fulfilling home means to the individual. This involves setting personal goals, challenging low expectations, and creating a vision for a meaningful life. The vision is developed with input from family, friends, and supporters and may be captured visually or in writing.

Planning: Based on the vision, a detailed and carefully considered plan is created to realise the desired living arrangement. This includes identifying necessary supports and engaging with NDIS

service providers if needed. The plan should reflect the person's strengths, needs, and preferences. In the planning phase, the focus is on making the vision a reality by asking:

- **Where Could I Live?** Explore various community settings, neighbourhoods, and amenities. Find living arrangements that fit the person's needs and preferences. Research options, consider trial arrangements, and evaluate what has been done before.
- **Ways of Living:** Identify different types of housing and living arrangements.
- **Who or What Could Support Me?** Consider informal supports like family, friends,

and neighbours. Explore other informal options such as Circles of Support or Micro-boards. Evaluate potential funded supports if needed.

- **What Supports Do I Need?** Determine necessary daily supports, home maintenance, and community engagement. Plan for both day and night support needs and resources.

These areas of exploration are captured in Visual 2 – “Have you thought About...?” Conversation prompts for ILO planning” (Appendix E):

Implementing: This phase involves putting the plan into action, with support from navigators to ensure the vision is realised. During this phase the ILA Navigator supports the person with disability and their family through capacity building, provision of information, resources, and support to ensure arrangement are aligned with the person’s vision. This phase may also include engaging with a service provider.

The Good Life: The individual moves into their new living arrangement and works towards thriving in their new home. Regular monitoring is done to ensure supports are effective and the vision is maintained.

Maintaining and reviewing: For those already settled in their ILA, this phase involves ILA Navigators working with the person with disability and their family to review the living arrangement and consider changes if needed.

These steps are highlighted in the ILA visuals (appendix D) and service user journey blueprint (appendix E).

Conclusion

The My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project demonstrated a significant impact in enhancing the capacity and confidence of people with developmental disability, their families, and their supporters to explore and pursue innovative models of individualised living. Through dedicated capacity building and the provision of comprehensive resources and information, the project has effectively increased awareness and understanding of individualised living arrangements. Project workers have played a crucial role in supporting people with developmental disability and families to develop actionable plans, fostering a deeper appreciation of what is achievable beyond conventional congregate care models. By providing people with developmental disability and their families with the information, tools, and resources needed to explore alternatives to traditional group home arrangements and towards personalised living solutions, the project has empowered people with disability to envision and realise their ideal living situations.

The long-term success of this project will be evidenced by a growing number of people with developmental disability moving towards self-directed living arrangements. This shift not only upholds the rights of people with developmental disability to exercise choice and control but also enriches the broader community by promoting more diverse and inclusive living options. The continued development of innovative housing solutions will meet the rising demand for personalised living arrangements and further support the well-being and autonomy of people with developmental disability.

Ultimately, My Home My Design: Making ILO Real project represents a positive and transformative force, contributing to a more inclusive society that supports people with developmental disability can live where, how, and with whom they choose, fully integrated into the communities they call home.

Appendices

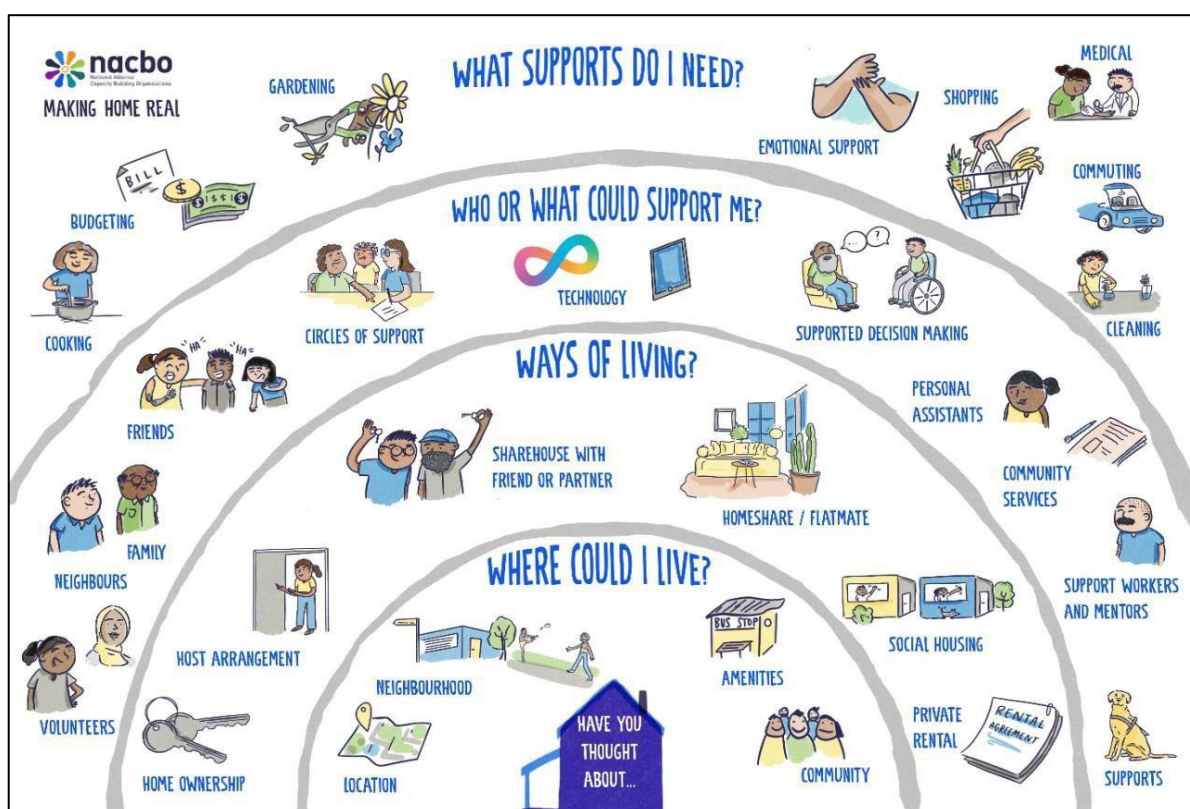
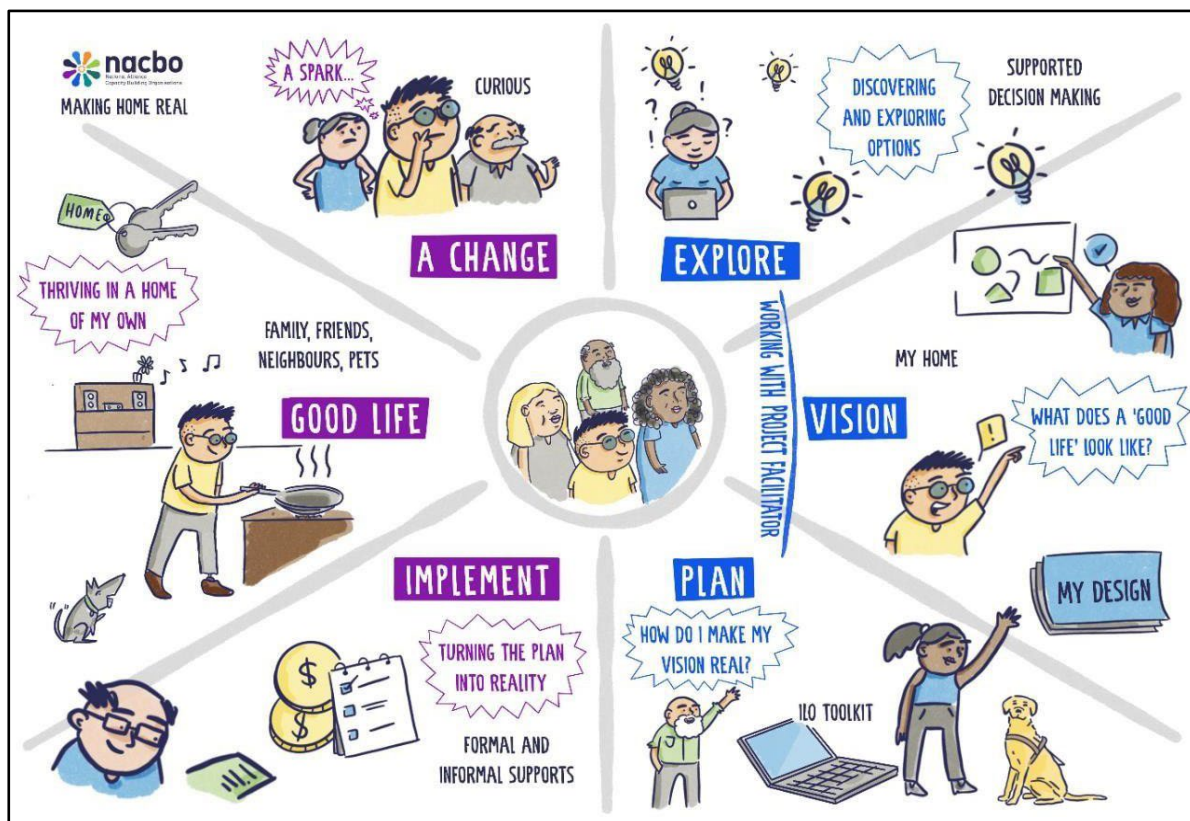
Appendix A - Evaluation Framework

| MY HOME MY DESIGN MAKING INDIVIDUALISED LIVING OPTIONS REAL LOGIC MODEL | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AIM: To increase the knowledge of and access to individualised living arrangements/options for people with disabilities and their families | | | | |
| OBJECTIVE: People with disabilities living in their own homes and thriving (not in group homes) | | | | |
| INPUTS | OUTPUTS | | OUTCOMES | MEASURABLES |
| | Activities | Audience | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant funding NACBO oversight Workers employed under the grant (Navigators) Developers/designers Communication tools – Websites / Facebook Materials PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY, their families and supports | Toolkit (tech guide) | People with disability and their families Navigators | Informed individuals with disability and families Informed and skilled Navigators – able to provide technical navigational service | Case studies (stories of change) Reflective online survey of Navigators, focus group based on feedback from survey and discussion of questions (line of survey inquiry – have navigators improved their skills/knowledge and technical capacity over time; what has / hasn't been helpful?) |
| | Navigators training/ professional development | Navigators | Skilled and informed Home Navigators | Data Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey as above Hours of training received Frequency of topics discussed in community of practice |
| | Navigation Service Information Level of support service (distinguishing between support for a full ILO service and responding to one-off requests for information) | People with disability, individuals and families | Information – informed individuals and families Full ILO support service – improved lives of people with disability and living independently in their own home | Data on how many requests for information and type of information requested Full ILO support service 18 case studies 3 People with disability and families form each organisations interviewed |
| | | People with disability, families My Home My Way workshop participants Support Coordinators Disability Service Providers NACBO | Potential participants are aware that the service exists | Written story on how the project was implemented, timeframes, variations from original plan, NACBO involvement Data collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of contacts about the service List of where the service information can be found online (websites and social media) Data on where people found out about the Project |

Appendix B - Data Collection Framework

| Category name | When collected/recorded? | By whom | Collection system | Required by |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Stat data Sheet Initial contact | At time of initial contact typically over the phone | Making Home Real project worker | Stats data sheet stored in teams' space | Commencing 1 March 2023 then Ongoing |
| Stat Data Sheet Engagement | Commencement and end of engagement | Making Home Real project worker | Stats data sheet stored in teams' space | Commencing 1 March 2023 then Ongoing |
| Survey | Now and May 2024 | Making Home Real project worker from another state | Individual interview sample | Now and May 2024 |
| Stories | Ongoing | Making Home Real project worker | Emailed to Project Lead | 12/7/2023; 19/1/2024 & 1/7/2024 |

Appendix C - ILO Visuals



Appendix D - ILO Service Journey Blueprint

