

Building a system of foundational supports for psychosocial disability across Australia.

Presenters:

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**We acknowledge the tradition of custodianship and
law of the Countries on which each of us live and
work.**

**We pay our respects to those who have cared and
continue to care for Country.**



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Acknowledgement of lived experience

We want to take a moment to acknowledge and thank everyone here who brings their lived or living experience of mental health challenges, recovery, and wellbeing.

Your experiences, your stories, and your insights help us all to learn, grow, and build more understanding and supportive communities. They are an integral part of our research and our team.

We also want to recognise family members, carers, friends, and peers who walk alongside others on their journeys — your support and compassion make a real difference.

We know that talking about mental health can sometimes bring up strong feelings. Please take care of yourself during this session and reach out for support if you need it.

Thank you for being here and for the courage and wisdom you bring to this conversation.



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Plan for today

- ✓ How today's webinar will run
- ✓ Our project
- ✓ Background
- ✓ What are targeted foundational supports, rationale and target group
- ✓ Overview of the model
- ✓ Questions and answers
- ✓ Next steps



Better psychosocial supports for people with mental health challenges

Australian Research Council (ARC) funded program of research 2024-2029

Partner:

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) – important for policy translation of our research findings.

Methods:

Statistical analysis of administrative data, linked data and surveys, qualitative research (interviews, document analysis), economic modelling, policy analysis, reviews of existing programs/ approaches.

National plus case study sites: New South Wales, Northern Territory; forensic and Justice systems; First Nations.

Completed so far (relevant examples only):

- Equity analysis of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) access
- Large survey (1600+) of NDIS participants, others with mental health challenges, community members on proposed NDIS changes
- Scoping review of Partners in Recovery literature
- 85 interviews with NDIS participants, family members and 'stakeholders'
- Scoping review of community-based psychosocial supports

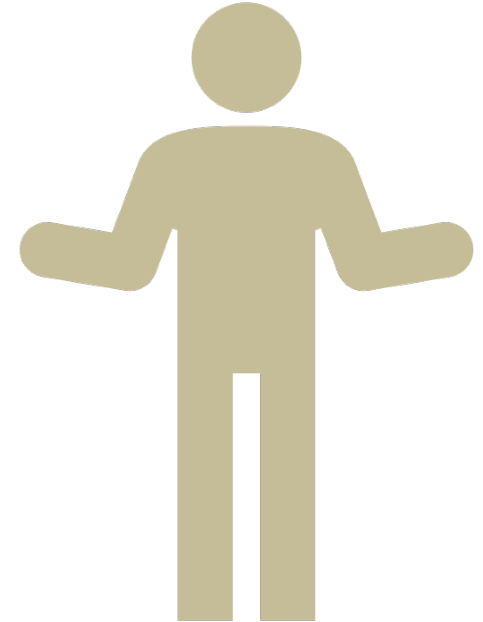


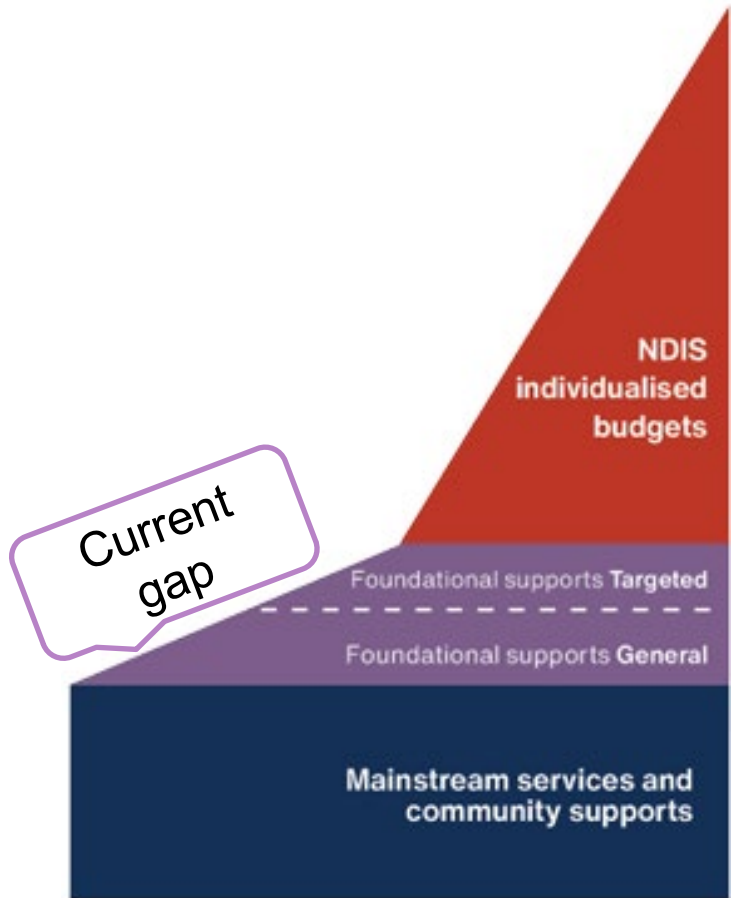
What are targeted foundational supports and why are they needed?

If we put people at the heart of mental health support systems, what do they want?

An **ecosystem** of supports to give the **foundation** to live a good life

- Unique to an individual
- Inter-reliant and connected
- Every part has a role to play in its success
- Changes and adapts, understanding contexts and communities
- Diverse and cross-sectoral





NDIS Review (2023) defined targeted and general foundational supports

Psychosocial supports:

- ✓ non-clinical community-based supports
- ✓ aim to facilitate recovery in the community
- ✓ a range of services to help people manage daily activities, rebuild and maintain connections, build social skills and participate in education and employment

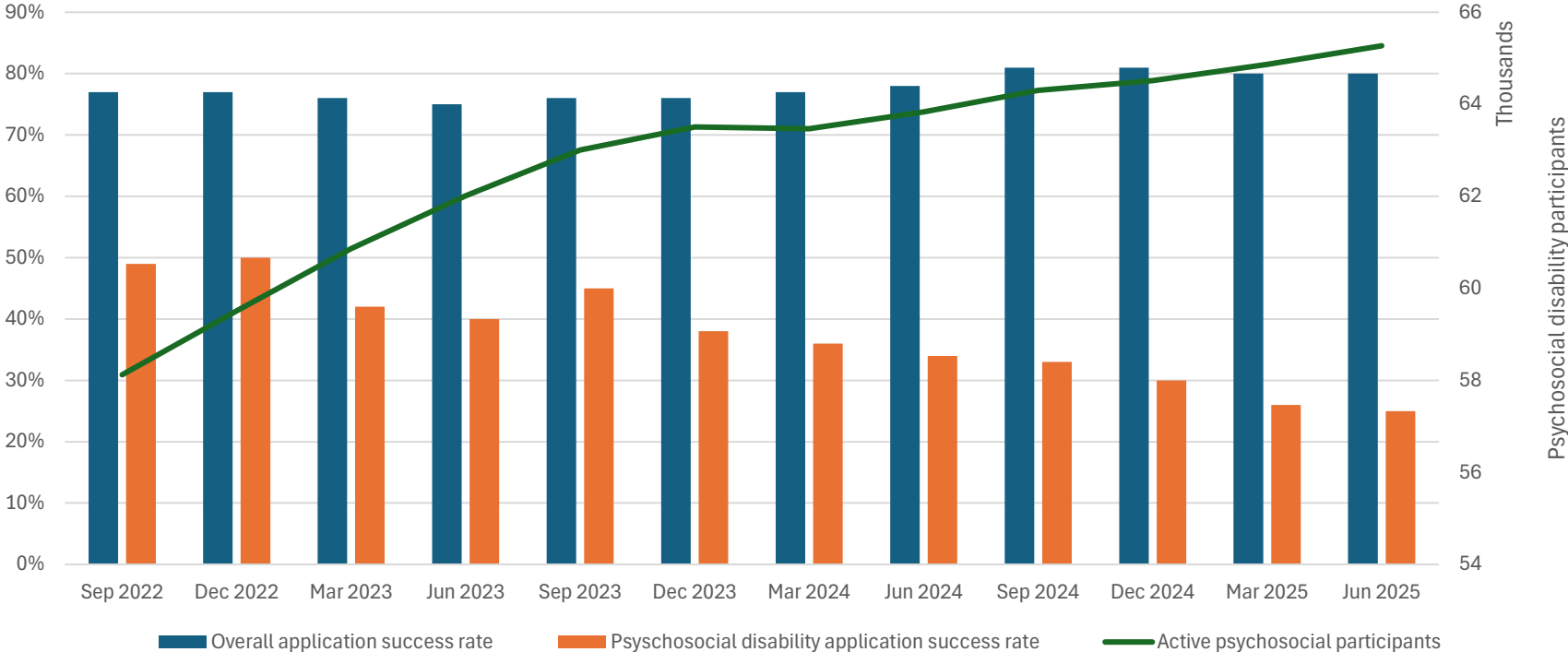
Targeted foundational supports:

- ✓ early intervention and low intensity care supports
- ✓ primarily for specific groups of people most in need
- ✓ includes early supports for children with development concerns and psychosocial support services

General foundational supports:

- ✓ available to benefit all people with disability, and where appropriate, their families and carers
- ✓ includes information and advice and peer support

Slow growth in NDIS participants with psychosocial disability, and the rate of successful applications is continuing to reduce



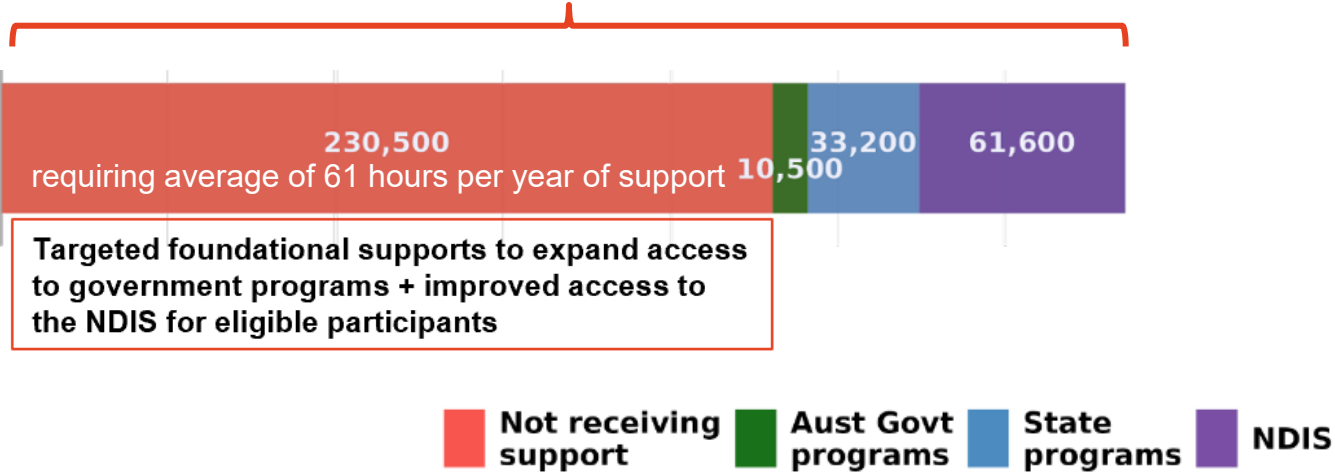
Why **TARGETED** for psychosocial disability and not part of general foundational supports?

Data from NDIS consistently show people with psychosocial disability have some of the poorest experiences and access challenges

- **the lowest successful rate of application:** 25% of applicants met access criteria (compared to 80% overall)
- **a much older cohort:** despite typical onset for severe mental illness occurring 2 decades earlier: participants aged 45+ represent 52% of new participants and 63% of psychosocial participants (c.f. 22% of all participants)
- **higher functional impairment scoring:** 92% have only low or medium levels of functional capacity c.f. 65% all participants
- **lower social and community engagement** and only slight improvement: 30% c.f. 41% all participants, with average rate of improvement 4% from first assessment
- **lower employment rate** and no improvement: 11% c.f. 22% all participants
- **lower overall scheme satisfaction rate:** 69% c.f. to 74% all participants

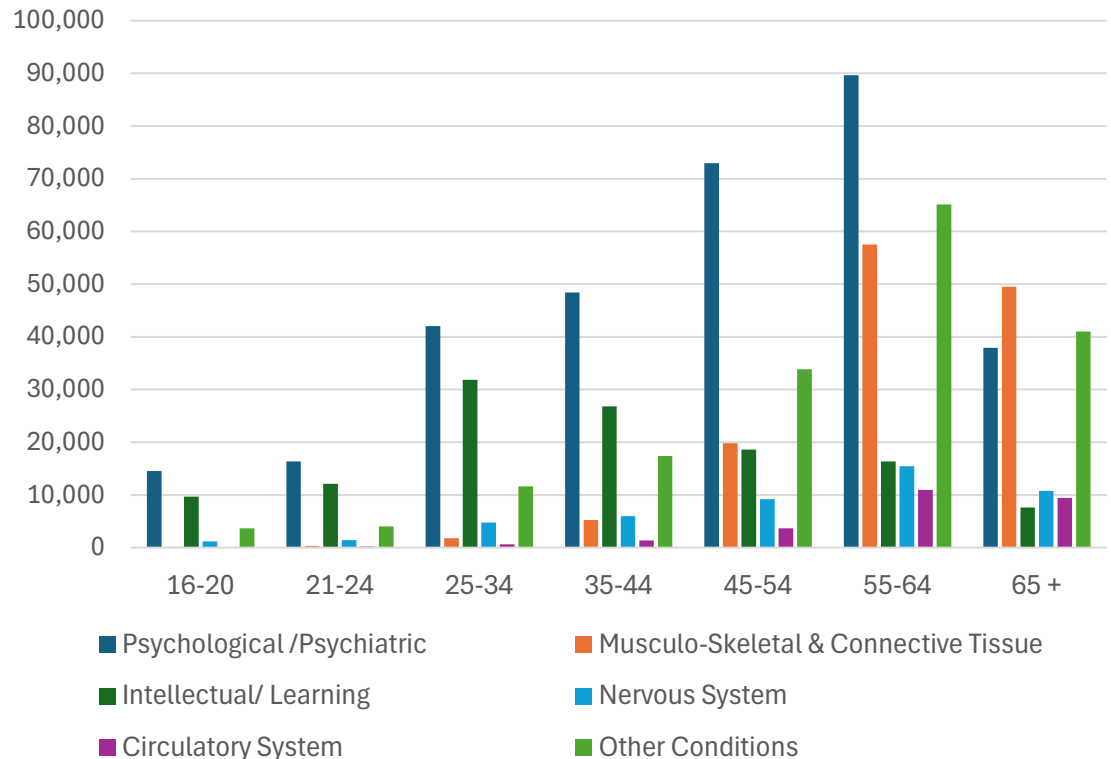
The 'Unmet Needs' report shows a 335,800 people with severe mental illness (2022/23) requiring psychosocial supports

Total modelled need for psychosocial supports



Disability Support Pension for a psychological/psychiatric condition shows a similar count and an important consideration for planning

- ✓ 321,855 Australians on the DSP for a mental health related condition (39% of all recipients)
- ✓ Means significant + ongoing impairment in daily function, behaviour, and participation in social or work activities
- ✓ Similar proportion of males and females
- ✓ Basic fortnightly payment of \$1080



Primary target group for foundational supports:

Anyone living with mental health challenges, experiencing severe functional impairments and barriers to participation and likely to benefit from support services

**Foundational supports:
an individualised
systemic approach.**



A basic guide to the ecosystem



A more complex guide to the ecosystem

Navigator has a personal ongoing relationship with the individual, responsible for personalised care planning and support (recovery and crisis planning), connects to services through warm referrals, varies in intensity.



Health + Mental Health
e.g. clinical care, case management, crisis support + digital services


Housing + Accommodation
e.g. social housing, homelessness services


Education + employment
e.g. disability employment services


Income support
e.g. disability support pension

Specialist state funded services
e.g. housing with support, forensic programs, inpatient transition

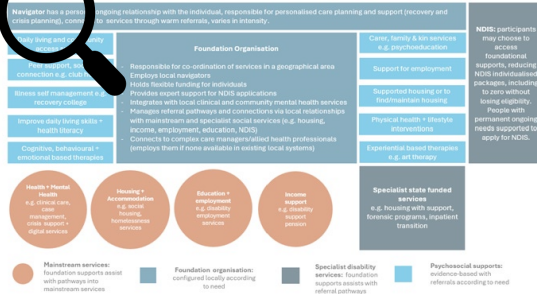
 **Mainstream services:** foundation supports assist with pathways into mainstream services

 **Foundation organisation:** configured locally according to need

 **Specialist disability services:** foundation supports assists with referral pathways

 **Psychosocial supports:** evidence-based with referrals according to need

The Navigator



- ✓ Identified as the most essential element of foundational supports
- ✓ Ongoing recovery-oriented relationship
- ✓ Connects people to services and a key mediator between individual and supports
- ✓ Provides limited interventions
- ✓ Available for anyone who needs support beyond information provision
- ✓ Understands mental health challenges, recovery-oriented practice, trauma informed practice through training and experience, including lived experience
- ✓ Embedded in a team and support structure that provides supervision, a 'knowledge network' of services and where flexible funding might be needed

The rationale for psychosocial recovery navigators

Support Coordinators and Recovery Coaches.

The 2023 NDIS Review recommended another role be introduced: Psychosocial Recovery Navigators. Roles both inside and outside the NDIS.

Our research (interviews and review of existing literature) has found:

- Both the Support Coordination and Recovery Coach roles were seen as important to the effective operation of the NDIS for clients with psychosocial disability.
- **The literature shows the effectiveness of support coordination and recovery coaching and emphasises the importance of the roles within the NDIS.**
- The delivery of coordination/coaching under these roles has not universally lived up to expectations.

- **The ability of the roles to carry out their aims is limited by**
 - 1) a lack of role clarity,**
 - 2) the NDIS market model**
 - 3) a lack of stewardship to ensure supports go to those who need them.**
- The navigator role envisioned here addresses this through organisational stability, clearer role boundaries, clear training and experience requirements.

The foundation organisation

- Responsible for co-ordination of services in a geographical area
- Employs local navigators
- Holds flexible funding for individuals
- Provides expert support for NDIS applications
- Integrates with local clinical and community mental health services
- Manages referral pathways and connections via local relationships with mainstream and specialist social services
- Connects to complex care managers/allied health professionals (employs them if none available in existing local systems)



Key core functions: coordination and navigator supervision.

Commissioned through Primary Health Networks (PHNs)

Options:

- Advocacy Organisations
- Individual psychosocial support-focused NGOs with experience of psychosocial service delivery.
- Local community groups (e.g. local ACCHOs)
- Consortia of any of the above

Psychosocial supports will depend on individual needs

Daily living and community access support

Peer support, social connection e.g. club house

Illness self management e.g. recovery college

Improve daily living skills + health literacy

Cognitive, behavioural + emotional based therapies

- ✓ Supports are offered by organisations with existing expertise in these areas
- ✓ Clear referral pathways into health and allied health (including OTs, psychology etc)
- ✓ Supporting access to other community-based supports (e.g. housing supports, food programs, employment supports, drug and alcohol supports). May need additional funding to support this group more effectively where there is existing underservice]

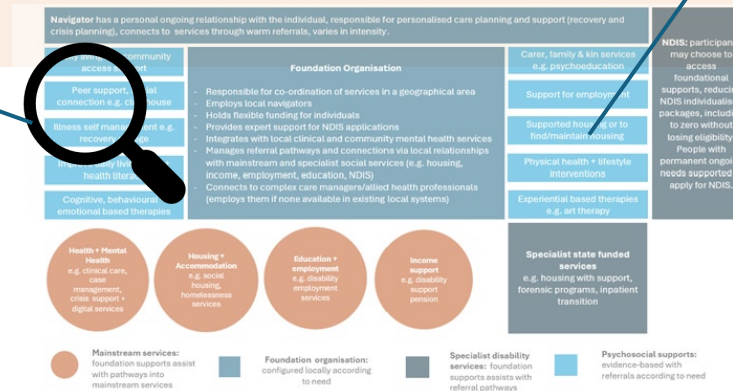
Carer, family & kin services

Support for employment

Supported housing or to find/maintain housing

Physical health + lifestyle interventions

Experiential based therapies e.g. art therapy



Other key support elements

- Complex needs support management
- Prioritisation of the social determinants of health
- Community development
- Family support
- NDIS application support (professionalised and free)



Foundational supports insufficient and meets eligibility requirements for NDIS?

Foundational Organisation provides additional support:

Navigator/Case manager works with participant, carers/family and kin +multidisciplinary team to determine whether

- functional impairment is likely to be permanent
- needs would be best met through an individualised funding package
- Referrals required to specialist long or short term support providers funded
- Assists with 'warm' referral and collaborative planning with NDIA, including funding necessary reports

Mainstream and specialist state funded services are essential parts of the ecosystem including the NDIS

Health + Mental Health

e.g. clinical care, community treatment teams, crisis support, digital services

Housing + Accommodation

e.g. social housing, homelessness services

Education + employment

e.g. disability employment services

Income support

e.g. disability support pension

Specialist state funded services

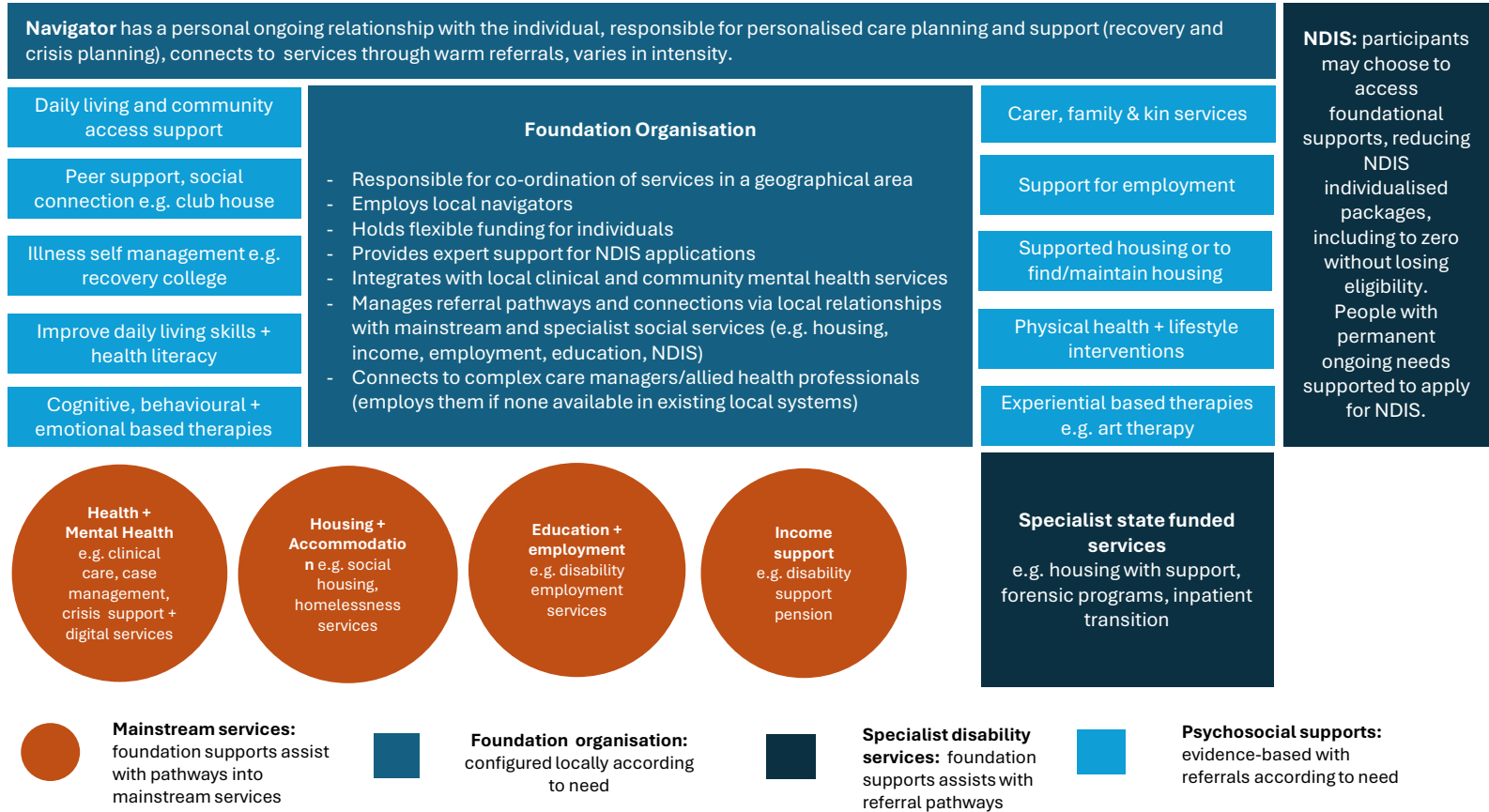
e.g. housing with support, forensic programs, inpatient transition

People likely to be eligible supported to apply

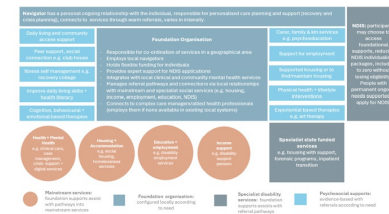
NDIS participants

- ✓ may choose to access foundational supports
- ✓ reducing NDIS individualised packages, including to zero without losing eligibility
- ✓ people with permanent ongoing needs supported to apply for NDIS

Putting the foundational supports ecosystem together



Other essential elements



A national community-based model embedded in community development with ‘no wrong door’

A person-centred approach, intentionally combining clinical and psychosocial supports to provide wrap-around services that facilitate clinical and functional recovery

Lived experience co-design and governance embedded

Funding mix reactive to local area needs and flexible for individuals

National data collection tools and outcome measurements, with mandatory evaluation in each site and transparent shared learning

Operates separately from, but collaboratively with (as needed) the NDIS and health services.

Positive movements and potential stumbling blocks

- The Federal government has recognised need and prioritised ‘foundational supports’
- There is general sector-wide agreement that foundational supports is an important consideration in how we address current gaps
- We have existing (sadly defunded) programs that have worked for this group, so we know this is a good approach

BUT

- Lack of state, territory and federal government agreement
- Lack of political will to push for reform
- Lack of trust in Federal government reforms from the community (fears that ‘they want to take away the NDIS’)

Questions? Concerns? Arguments?

Link to our research:



Contact us: mh-ndis.project@sydney.edu.au

Project webpage: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/medicine-health/our-research/research-centres/centre-for-disability-research-and-policy/research/fixing-the-ndis-for-people-with-psychosocial-disability.html>