

# LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

## Policy Commitment

Co-designed Home and Living experiences offering genuine choice and control

### Separation within Life Without Barriers of supported independent living and specialist disability accommodation

Life Without Barriers recognises that current home and living models have not been informed or designed by the very people who need them. This means that often they fall short of meeting the needs, aspirations and rights of people with disability. Furthermore, in many cases, the same service provider provides management of the specialist disability housing as well as the independent living supports which are required to enable a person with disability to live a meaningful life. This lack of separation may limit the genuine choices people with disability have in choosing their providers for the tailored, individualised services they receive under the NDIS.

To be true allies and partners of people with disability, Life Without Barriers recognises we must play a proactive role in contributing to progressive and informed change in co-designing the home and living options our clients have every right to expect, and crucially, ensure they have choice over the providers who support them.

#### Life Without Barriers Supported Independent Living and Specialist Disability Accommodation Services

Life Without Barriers operates around 440 independent living services for over 1,200 people across Australia with around 180 of

these homes transferred to Life Without Barriers from the New South Wales and Victorian governments. These services are predominantly group homes with a majority of properties rented or owned by state governments. Most of the people with disability in these settings are entitled to Specialist Disability Accommodation funding and in some cases, Life Without Barriers provides both the supports for independent living and the specialist disability housing to each participant, arrangements which may not be the choice of the person with disability.

#### Commitment to separate Independent Living Services from Specialist Disability Housing within Life Without Barriers

The NDIS is intended to create choice, but that may not be the experience for people with disability in supported housing. Many people with disability live in homes controlled by a disability service provider and are required to use disability support from that same service provider, resulting in an arrangement that does not give people with disability the same choices as other people in the community. In these cases, the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission have heard from many people with disability about the negative impact of these arrangements, including that it can make it hard to leave a home that isn't working.

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Co-designed Home and Living experiences offering genuine choice and control

Life Without Barriers recognises the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which enshrines the inherent right to choice a person with disability has in all aspects of their life, including their home and living arrangements. In addition to our commitment to uphold the CRPD, Life Without Barriers Client Rights Statement is our organisational commitment to protect and uphold the human rights of people with disability.

Life Without Barriers recognises that in cases where we are providing both supported independent living and specialist disability accommodation, that the person may not have the choice they have a right to expect. We are therefore making a proactive commitment to change our approach in partnership with people with disability. Our commitment is to work towards Life Without Barriers no longer providing both supported independent living services and specialist disability accommodation to the same participant and to co-designing home and living arrangements with people with disability that ensure genuine choice and control.

To date around 70% of the homes we operate are fully separated and managed by separate SDA providers. Approximately 14% are on a pathway to separation and we will continue to accelerate the final stages of separation as quickly as practicable.

### Timeline

Life Without Barriers will cease directly managing the homes that people with disability live in as soon as practicable, with the rights, needs and interests of people with disability

guiding the implementation plan. Instead, we will work with people with disability and other housing providers to support people to make choices over their new SDA provider while we get on with our core business – providing outstanding and excellent care and support for people with disability.

While this is happening, we have put in place mechanisms to separate the management of homes from the direct support to people with disability. We will work directly with people with disability and their families who live in these homes to explore their choice and control about where they live, who they live with and what kind of supports they use.

Although this policy will result in changes for a relatively small number of people choosing Life Without Barriers services, we are determined to be transparent about our commitment to honouring the choice and control people with disability have a right to experience now and into the future.

### Co-design PRINCIPLES

- Life Without Barriers is undertaking this process in direct consultation with people with lived experience and we will be guided by their views, choices and preferences.
- Life Without Barriers is engaging with advocates, families and carers because we recognise the substantial and important insight and expertise they offer.
- At all stages of this process, Life Without Barriers is protecting and promoting and promote the rights of people with disability and adhere to our obligations in relation to these rights.