



What to expect from the Evidence to Action Event

Exploring the evidence to enable the elimination of restrictive practices in Australia

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Summary

About the National Disability Research Partnership

The National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) funds research led by and with people with disability. Its purpose is to build a national disability research program in Australia that builds evidence for policy and practice to advance the rights of people with disability.

The NDRP wants research to lead to real solutions. This means working together with people with disability, government, service providers, and the community.

Evidence to action

Part of the NDRP program is holding ‘evidence to action’ events to talk about what we know about a certain topic, what we don’t know, and what research is needed. The goal of these events is to work together and inform future research and policy directions.

Mobilising evidence for action means using good research to make real changes that help people with disability. This means making sure findings from research is used to improve laws, systems, and support services. We are getting ready for our first event called: *Exploring the Evidence to Enable the Elimination of Restrictive Practices in Australia*.

Evidence gap summary

For this event, we asked Associate Professor Linda Steele (University of Technology Sydney) and Associate Professor Dinesh Wadiwel (University of Sydney) to write about what we still need to learn to stop using restrictive practices. We encourage everyone to read this report before coming to the event. [Read the report](#).

This report builds on a 2023 report called Restrictive Practices: A Pathway to Elimination. It also includes ideas from the Disability Royal Commission.

What you will find in this document

- the agenda for the event on 5 December 2024, with names and times,
- details about the speakers,
- information to help you get ready,
- questions people often ask, and
- some of the key terms.



The agenda

1:00 pm AEDT – Session 1 (60 mins)

What we know about restrictive practices, their impacts, and harm:

- **5 mins:** Clare Gibellini, NDRP Board Chair, opens the event.
- **10 mins:** Hon. Amanda Rishworth, Minister for Social Services, gives a speech.
- **10 mins:** Professor Alastair McEwin AM shares what the Royal Commission learned.
- **5 mins:** Jane Britt, event facilitator, introduces the event.
- **5 mins:** Jane Britt and Poppy Mullins talk about what makes a good life.
- **10 mins:** Professor Linda Steele explains the current research.

Screen break (10 mins)

2:10 pm AEDT – Session 2 (45 mins)

The research and evidence gaps on how to eliminate restrictive practices:

- **15 mins:** Three speakers will share what their ideas about gaps in what we know:
 1. **Rod Carracher**, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, on what research is needed.
 2. **Catherine McAlpine**, Inclusion Australia, on evidence gaps.
 3. **Robyn Shannon**, Department of Social Services, on what's needed for better policy.
- **25 mins:** Jane Britt will lead a panel discussion to answer your questions.

Screen break (5 mins)

3:00 pm AEDT – Session 3 (60 mins) **(UPDATED)**

Building the evidence base for policy and practice to enable elimination of restrictive practices:

- **10 mins:** Megan Spindler-Smith, People with Disability Australia on listening to advocates.
- **10 mins:** Professor Sally Robinson talks about what has worked well in research.
- **15 mins:** Jane Britt asks the audience for ideas on what's next.
- **15 mins:** Professor Helen Dickinson on how research can address "Where to From Here"
- **5 mins:** Jane Britt and Clare Gibellini close the event and share support information.



Speakers

Clare Gibellini: NDRP Host and Board Chair

Clare Gibellini is the Chair of the NDRP Board and a passionate advocate for disability inclusion. She brings her lived experience as a woman with multiple disabilities, including autism. Clare also serves on the Oversight Council for the National Autism Strategy and is involved in various advisory roles to improve outcomes for people with disability.

Jane Britt: Event Facilitator

Jane Britt is a Disability Policy and Engagement Consultant with extensive experience in advocacy, policy development, and leadership in the disability sector. With a background in roles at People with Disability Australia and Blind Citizens Australia, she brings lived experience of deafblindness and a strong commitment to upholding the rights of people with disability.

Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP: Opening Address

The Hon. Amanda Rishworth is the Minister for Social Services, with a background in psychology and extensive experience in social policy, including disability, health, and education. She has served in federal parliament since 2007 and is committed to improving mental health and social services for Australians.

Professor Alastair McEwin AM

Professor Alastair McEwin AM has extensive experience in disability and human rights and has held significant roles, including Australia's Disability Discrimination Commissioner and a Royal Commissioner for the Disability Royal Commission. Profoundly deaf, he has a background in law, business, and advocacy, with a career dedicated to disability rights and human rights.

Poppy Mullins: Lived experience advocate

Poppy Mullins (she/her) is a writer and advocate with lived experience of quadriplegic cerebral palsy. She focuses on disability-inclusive education reform and is currently completing a Creative Writing degree. Poppy is also the creator of *Pure Ruminations*, an interview program on 4ZZZ's Zed Digital platform, and has contributed to initiatives like Children and Young People with Disability's National Youth Disability Summit and the Disability Royal Commission.

Professor Linda Steele:

Linda Steele is an Associate Professor at University of Technology Sydney, and a socio-legal researcher focused on disability, law, and social justice. Her work explores the legal and social systems affecting people with disability, informed by her background as a solicitor in disability rights.



Rod Carracher

Rod Carracher is the Acting Deputy Commissioner of the Practice Quality Division at the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. Rod has over seven years as a Chief Practitioner for a major disability service provider and extensive leadership experience in disability services, youth justice, and social housing.

Catherine McAlpine

Catherine McAlpine is the CEO of Inclusion Australia and Co-Chair of the National Disability Data Asset. With a strong background in disability advocacy, she has worked on major sector reforms and brings her experience as a carer and mother of a young man with an intellectual disability.

Robyn Shannon

Robyn Shannon is the Deputy Secretary for Disability and Carers at the Department of Social Services. With over 20 years in social policy roles, she has led reforms in areas such as income support, early childhood education, and school funding.

Megan Spindler-Smith: Systemic and lived experience advocate

Megan Spindler-Smith (they/them) is the Deputy CEO of People with Disability Australia. They bring lived experience as a person with disability and expertise in strategic leadership, diversity, and cultural change. Megan has held senior roles at Yooralla, ABC, University of Technology Sydney, and the NSW Department of Education and is a passionate advocate for intersectional disability rights and inclusion.

Professor Sally Robinson

Sally Robinson is a Professor in Disability and Community Inclusion at Flinders University. Her research focuses on what helps children and adults with disability feel safe and supported. She has worked extensively alongside people with disability as co-researchers, advocating for their voices to influence policy and practice.

Professor Helen Dickinson (NEW)

Helen Dickinson is Professor of Public Service Research at University of New South Wales, Canberra and a NDRP Board member. Her expertise is in public services, with particular interest in areas that require different parts of government and other partners to work together in achieving aims. Helen has a particular interest in thinking about how we can get other forms of voices heard in policy and research to those that typically dominate conversations.



Pre-reading (optional)

We encourage all attendees to read two key documents before the event:

- **Eliminating Restrictive Practices: Evidence Gap Analysis.** Prepared for the National Disability Research Partnership. Written by Linda Steele and Dinesh Wadiwel. (2024). [Read the analysis.](#)
- **A model for eliminating the use of restrictive practices against people with an intellectual disability (Inclusion Australia)** [Check out what the model says.](#)

Frequently asked questions

How can I participate in the event?

We want everyone to feel comfortable participating in our Zoom webinar in a way that best suits their needs.

Ways to participate:

- You can use the Q&A function to ask questions. Our hosts will review and read out questions to make sure everyone can hear and engage with the discussion.
- Since this is a webinar, participant cameras and microphones will be turned off. However, you can still share your thoughts through the Q&A feature.

Accessibility and comfort measures:

- We will take regular 10- to 30-second pauses to give everyone time to process the information.
- If you'd like to share a comment or ask a question, please use the Q&A function. Our hosts will make sure to acknowledge your input as part of the event flow.
- We aim to make sure everyone has the chance to be heard and contribute.

Guidelines for a respectful and inclusive space:

- Be considerate of the different experiences and perspectives that people bring to the discussion.
- Avoid using acronyms or jargon. If you do, please explain or spell them out clearly so everyone understands.
- Use and respect people's preferred pronouns and language, such as "person on the autism spectrum" or "an autistic person."
- Use strengths-based language that promotes respect, understanding, and acceptance.



We hope everyone feels welcome to engage and participate in a way that feels right for them. Thank you for contributing to a respectful and inclusive environment.

Will the event be recorded?

Yes, the event will be recorded and will be made available on the NDRP YouTube channel. At the start of the session, the facilitator will let everyone know that the event is being recorded. Since this is a webinar, your camera and microphone will be off, so you will not be visible or audible in the recording.

What if I have technical difficulties or need help?

We will have support available to assist. You can send a message in the Zoom Q&A function or email Sue Tape, Head of Evidence to Action who is organising this event at info@ndrp.org.au.

Can I take a break?

Yes, there will be breaks between each of the three sessions. You are also welcome to take additional breaks whenever you need to. You are welcome to stay in the webinar during these breaks.

Will there be captioning?

Yes, captions will be available during the event. A professional captioner will type what is said for accuracy. To turn captions on or off, click the “More” button (three dots) in the Zoom menu and select “Captions.”

Will there be Auslan interpreters?

Yes, Auslan interpreters will be available for the whole event.

Why is the chat turned off?

We will turn the chat function off so that everyone can have a better and more accessible experience. There are lots of people registered and having the chat turned off helps people using screen readers, as screen readers read out all the chat messages, which can be hard to follow. You can post questions, comments or feedback in the Q&A function.



Who will be attending?

Attendees will include people with disability, family members, researchers, policymakers, advocates, service providers, and government representatives. So far, over 475 people have registered.

Will I need to speak during the event?

No, you will not need to speak during the event. Your microphone and camera will be off, but you can engage by using the Q&A function to share any questions or comments.

What if my question doesn't get answered in the event?

If your question isn't answered, or if you have additional questions afterward, you can email us at info@ndrp.org.au. We will follow up with an email after the event and include responses to any unanswered questions. We will also share a summary document that will include answers to questions and a link to the event transcript.

What can I do to prepare?

You can think about some things before the event, such as:

1. What we know about restrictive practices

- Think about what you already know about restrictive practices.
- Think about what a good life looks like for people with disability: feeling safe, having choices, and being included.

2. The research and evidence gaps

- What do we still need to learn to stop using restrictive practices?
- How can research help change policies, laws and systems?
- Who needs to work together to make these changes?

3. Building the evidence base

- What has worked well to reduce or stop restrictive practices?
- What ideas do you have for new research to make things better?



Where can I go to for help?

Talking about trauma

Talking about restrictive practices may be upsetting or bring back bad memories for some people. It's important to take care of yourself and your wellbeing during these conversations.

Support services

If you feel upset or need support, you can contact these services:

- Lifeline Australia – 13 11 14 | www.lifeline.org.au
- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636 | www.beyondblue.org.au
- SANE Australia – 1800 18 7263 | www.sane.org
- 1800RESPECT – 1800 737 732 | www.1800respect.org.au
- Carers Australia – 1800 242 636 | www.carersaustralia.com.au

NDRP's role

The National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP) uses research to support changes to systems, policy and practice, but it cannot collect or respond to personal stories about restrictive practices.

Find an advocate

Advocates support or work on behalf of a person with disability to help them to speak out and defend their rights and interests. You can find advocacy support through the Disability Advocacy Network by [going to this link](#).

Or

By calling the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline (the Helpline) via [Disability Gateway](#): Call [1800 643 787](tel:1800643787), Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm, or fill out the [Contact Us Form](#).

Help for workers and service providers

If you are a worker or service provider and need to report unsafe practices or misuse of restrictive practices, here are some places to contact:

- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – 1800 035 544 www.ndiscommission.gov.au for reporting misuse of restrictive practices, provider misconduct, or unsafe practices.
- Australian Human Rights Commission – 1300 656 419 | www.humanrights.gov.au for concerns about human rights breaches in any sector.
- Fair Work Ombudsman – 13 13 94 | www.fairwork.gov.au for workers seeking advice or to report breaches of workplace laws.



Key terms

1. CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)
 - A set of rules made by the United Nations to protect the rights of people with disability. People with disability should have the same rights as everyone else.
2. Restrictive practices and elimination of restrictive practices
 - These are actions that take away a person's freedom, like holding them down or locking them in a room. Elimination means stopping completely and using supportive ways that respect people's choices and freedom.
3. Evidence-based practice
 - Using research and proven facts to decide what works best. It means making sure our actions are based on good evidence.
4. Supported decision-making
 - Helping people with disability make their own choices by giving them support from trusted people, instead of making decisions for them.
5. Lived experience
 - The real-life knowledge that people with disability have from their own experiences. This helps us understand what needs to change to make things better.
6. Safeguards
 - Things we do to keep people with disability safe from harm. This can include rules, support services, and ways for people to speak up if they are treated badly.
7. Cultural safety
 - Making sure people's cultural background is respected and that they are treated fairly, without discrimination. This is very important for First Nations people and other cultural groups.
8. Systemic change
 - Big changes that fix problems in the whole system, like in schools or hospitals, so that people with disability are treated fairly and included.
9. Individual Advocacy
 - Helping people with disability speak up for their rights and make sure their needs are met. Advocates give support to make sure their voices are heard.