

Flagship Program presented by

The Hopkins Centre

Research for Rehabilitation and Resilience

The GUARDian Research Program



To safeguard, uphold and advocate the rights of people with disability in all networks and systems.

The rapid advancement of new rehabilitation technologies and therapeutic discoveries combined with more sophisticated data and information systems is inching us closer to the possibility of more precise personalised rehabilitation for people with disability. At the same time, through policy reforms and social movements, the person with disability is being re-cast not simply as a user or consumer of services, but a self-governing consumer who expresses preferences through personal choices. Paradoxically, while expectations and opportunities are expanding, decision-making is becoming more and more complex for individuals, families, and providers, as are the governance mechanisms and allocation decisions that confront policy makers.

In the context of national disability and national injury schemes, based on individual care and support, funders and providers have very complex decisions to make about what interventions and supports to approve. This context is generating increasingly significant social and moral questions about resource prioritisation and the legitimacy of policy decisions. Consequently, there is greater urgency to improve public governance by strengthening the evidence base and creating opportunities to debate critical social, ethical and legal issues arising and to test and refine appropriate practice and policy solutions.

The GUARDian program is proposed to tackle the difficult questions of new practice and policy innovations and reforms for people with disability with a view to safeguard, uphold and advocate the rights of people with disability in all networks and systems. It will utilise the concept of policy labs to engage citizens with disability and stakeholders to debate critical social, ethical and legal issues that surround new therapeutic practices and policy tools and technologies; and to design evidence based solutions that are both fair and sustainable. Importantly, it is underpinned by the values of the self-governing citizen with disability as a rights holder and an active partner in contributing, creating and using data for policy and practice.

The GUARDian program will bring together an alliance of social science, legal, ethical and political science research experts to address the significant policy, legislative, moral and social questions arising in relation to the application of new evidence and advancements in rehabilitation practices and service delivery. The alliance will develop research capacity in the political and social science research foundations, including policy governance, law and human rights, that provide the framework for understanding highly complex issues and translating evidence into practice and service delivery.

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Making complex interfaces work for the National Disability Insurance Scheme

The future of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and participants' wellbeing is at risk unless critical interface issues are resolved satisfactorily for the thousands of people who require access to a mix of services and supports across a range of government and non-government organisations/providers. This project will provide an understanding around how 'reasonable and necessary' funded supports are being worked out within a highly complex organisational environment. By investigating organisational networks and front-line practices and choices, this project will uncover successful collaborative practices as well as interface tensions and gaps. It will also pinpoint where coordination incentives and supports are needed to safeguard efficiencies and choice.

Project investigators

Prof. Michele Foster – Menzies Health Institute Queensland, Griffith University; Prof. Karen Fisher – Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW; Prof. Catherine Needham – Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham; Dr Eloise Hummell, Ms Alyssa Venning and Ms Sam Borg – The Hopkins Centre, Griffith University.

Funder

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READY Study: Reaching hospitalised patients with disability who need NDIS supports for discharge

Hospitalised patients with disability and complex needs typically require a coordinated mix of health, rehabilitation and specialised disability and support services, along with equipment and assistive technologies in place before discharge. Unfortunately, the risk of disruption and delay is real as organisations and front-line personnel adjust to the NDIS environment. This project will provide empirical evidence about the implementation of the NDIS pathway in the hospital setting and pinpoint the types of complications and risks associated with discharge of hospitalised patients with disability. The benefits include data to inform a more responsive service system for the improved wellbeing of people with disability in the NDIS environment.

Project investigators

Prof. Michele Foster, Dr David Borg, A/Prof. Carolyn Ehrlich – Menzies Health Institute Queensland, Griffith University; Ms Vivien Houston, Ms Donna Harre, Dr Geoffrey Lau, Prof. Timothy Geraghty – Metro South Health.

Funder

The Summer Foundation

Adjudicating rights for a sustainable National Disability Insurance Scheme

The Australian Government currently faces a significant dilemma about how to allocate limited resources in a way that ensures the rights and entitlements of all Australians. Tensions between the financial sustainability of the NDIS and the provision of reasonable and necessary supports for individuals with disability need to be resolved. NDIS officials and personnel urgently require clarity and consistency to improve their decision-making. Citizens with a disability, particularly those without advocacy support, require assurances that their rights are safeguarded within the NDIS. This project will highlight the power and justice effects of the administration of the NDIS, including what principles and values serve as dominant justifications for reasonable and necessary support, areas of contestation with choice and control, and the discrepancies in how administrative justice is viewed.

Project investigators

Prof. Michele Foster – Menzies Health Institute Queensland, A/Prof. Kylie Burns – Griffith Law School, Prof. Sue Harris-Rimmer – Policy Innovation Hub, Dr Eloise Hummell and Ms Alyssa Venning – The Hopkins Centre, Griffith University.

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