

**LA TROBE**
UNIVERSITYLIVING WITH DISABILITY
RESEARCH CENTRE**Newsletter: Winter 2024**

This newsletter details the Living with Disability Research Centre's activities in the second and third quarters of 2024.

- New research projects.
- *Disability Practice: Safeguarding Quality Service Delivery* has reached 50,000 downloads
- RAPIDD Special Issue on the Disability Royal Commission
- PhD completion – Gail Ritchie
- Online Seminar Series – 2024
- New publications and presentations

Professor Christine Bigby

Director - Living with Disability Research Centre

New research projects**Behaviour support training for direct support workers****Partners:** The Centre for Disability Studies; Possability Group

The objective of this project is to enhance the quality of life of NDIS participants and safeguard the quality of support participants receive. The project will develop contemporary evidence informed eLearning modules in consultation with people with lived experience, direct support workers, NDIS providers, relevant stakeholders, and the NDIS Commission. These modules will empower disability support workers to cultivate understandings of evidence-based Behaviour Support practice, which will lead to better outcomes for NDIS participants.

Funding: NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**Duration:** 12 months**Design and testing of a tool to collect data from NDIS participants in relation to their subjective wellbeing and**

This research project will develop a new tool for collecting data from NDIS participants with high support needs about their Quality of Life and perceptions of the quality of the services that they receive. The tool will be piloted with a cross section of service providers and we anticipate it will comprise a combination of observational check lists, peer interviews and conversations with NDIS participants and staff.

Funding: NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Duration: 9 months

Review of usability of external practice quality resources

This consultancy project aims to improve the accessibility and usability of the NDIS Commission's external practice quality resources. A wide range of resources provide information, share practice knowledge and give instructional guidance about providing behaviour support to NDIS participants and the use of restrictive practices by disability service providers. This project reviewed relevant literature from various bodies of research that have investigated and recommended optimal approaches to developing this kind of content, and sought the perspectives of providers, the primary audience of the content, about their ease of access and usability of the resources and sought perspectives upon how these resources might be improved.

Funding: NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

Duration: 1 month

Disability Practice: Safeguarding Quality Service Delivery has reached 50,000 downloads

Disability Practice: Safeguarding Quality Service Delivery, edited by our director Professor Christine Bigby and Dr Alan Hough, director at Purpose at Work, has been downloaded over 50,000 times.

It was published by Springer in late 2023 and subsequently launched at a workshop event on February 15, 2024. More than 100 guests attended the launch event, which featured presentations from the editors and most of the contributing authors.

The book provides a key resource for researchers, students and practitioners in the field of disability practice. It is accessibly written, in a colloquial and

This book is open access, which means that you have free and unlimited access.

[\[link\]](#)

RAPIDD Special Issue on the Disability Royal Commission

Centre director Professor Christine Bigby and adjunct Professor Alan Hough have co-edited the *Research and Practice in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (RAPIDD) Special Issue on The Disability Royal Commission and People with Intellectual Disabilities*, a two-part special issue analysing the potential impacts of the Commission on the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and the service systems they use.

These two issues are collections of thoughtful and critical analyses of the Commission's findings and recommendations. By focusing on the issues most relevant for people with intellectual disabilities, they provide a counterpoint to the dedifferentiated (all of disability) approach taken by the Commission. There is a mix of papers written by academics, family members and self advocates in these issues.

Part 1 was published in July 2024. The papers include, commentary of the recommendations about group homes, housing, safeguarding, regulation, and restrictive practices.

The editorial provides background on the Commission's scope, and gives a rudimentary guide to navigating the Commission's outputs and website.

The papers included in part 2 are being progressively uploaded to the journal's website and the complete issue will be published in November. Papers currently available include commentary on the impact of neoliberalism on the Commissions approach, and the lack of attention to families, preventative health care.

[\[link\]](#)

PhD completion – Gail Ritchie

Study of Sexual Abuse'

This was a case study of an organisation which provided services for boys and youth with intellectual disabilities where allegations of sexual abuse had been made against a significant proportion of its members.

Grounded theory was used to examine publicly available documents about the organisation and its members who had been convicted of sexual abuse. The thesis will be available in the La Trobe University library in the coming months.

Online Seminar Series - 2024

Our next online seminar will take place on 11 September 2024 at 3pm AEST. Please email lids@latrobe.edu.au to register.

Topic: Perspectives about supported accommodation services for people with intellectual disabilities: What is associated with staff satisfaction and what do families think is important for a good service

Our September seminar will feature two presentations that look at recent findings from the La Trobe longitudinal study of supported accommodation services for people with intellectual disabilities.

Organisational Predictors of Staff Satisfaction in Australian Supported Accommodation Services

Dr Lincoln Humphreys, Research Fellow, Living with Disability Research Centre

Background: The quality of frontline staffs' practice is a determinant of quality of life outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities living in supported accommodation services. Staff shortages and turnover present organisations with challenges in retaining good and motivated workers. Increasing job satisfaction may contribute to enhancing staff performance and reducing turnover. The aim was to examine whether dimensions of staff culture predict job satisfaction.

Method: Disability support workers and frontline supervisors completed a survey comprising measures of job satisfaction, role clarity and role conflict, the Group Home Culture Scale, and questions about work experience and personal characteristics. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the job satisfaction scale (n = 788 staff). Using data from 330 staff working

Results: Exploratory factor analysis indicated three sub-scales of job satisfaction. The first subscale was about satisfaction with work conditions, which was predicted by role clarity, role conflict and the cultural dimension Collaboration within the Organisation. The second subscale was about satisfaction with tasks and development, which was predicted by role clarity and levels of engagement of the people supported. The third factor was about satisfaction with management, which was predicted by role clarity and Collaboration within the Organisation.

Conclusion: Organisational factors were found to be predictors of job satisfaction, suggesting that senior leaders' decisions and actions matter to how staff think and feel about their work. Enhancing connections between frontline staff with senior leaders and the broader organisation, as well as providing frontline staff with clear expectations and support to perform their role, may increase job satisfaction.

Family perspectives on group home experiences of their relative with severe intellectual disabilities

Professor Christine Bigby, Director, Living with Disability Research Centre, and **Dr Aaron Jackson**, Research Fellow, Living with Disability Research Centre

Background. The rights paradigm emphasises the importance of hearing what service users value and what needs to change. People with severe intellectual disabilities are often unheard and close family the only people who know this group well and advocate for them with service providers. This study aimed to explore how involved family members think about the quality of the group home where their family member lives, and what they is important to quality.

Method As part of a larger longitudinal study of supported accommodation services we interviewed 23 family members of 21 people with severe intellectual disabilities living in 17 separate group homes managed by 4 organisations. Interviews sought families' views about the quality in their relatives' service. Data were analysed using grounded theory methods.

Findings Families' perceived service quality as 'pretty good at the moment' but were uncertain about how long this would last, given the frequent changes in service leadership, atmosphere and support workers. They valued strong frontline leadership and regular communication with themselves, staff and leaders with energy and passion who knew their family member well and supported them to be engaged. They saw that unskilled leaders and staff often led to disengagement, a staff centred approach and simplistic interpretations of

member and were more engaged at the service level than with the organisations that managed services.

Conclusions Families' views in this study aligned with research about the importance of practice leadership, and provision of consistent support for engagement based on staff knowledge about each person. They were resigned to change but very concerned about staff turnover.

Our online seminars occur on the second Wednesday of every month at 3pm Melbourne time. Please email lids@latrobe.edu.au to register for or any further questions.

The online format we adopted in 2020 has continued to be a success and has allowed us to host presenters and attendees from all around Australia and internationally.

Slides from our past seminars, including video recordings of all our 2021, 2022 and 2023 seminars are available on our website [\[link\]](#)

Please email lids@latrobe.edu.au if you have any questions about our seminars.

Seminar topics

	Topic	Presenters
April 2024	<i>The Disability Royal Commission and the regulation of disability service provision</i>	Dr Alan Hough , Director at Purpose at Work and Adjunct Professor at La Trobe University
	<i>A critique of the Disability Royal Commission's approach to allied health for people with intellectual disabilities</i>	Laura Hogan , Chief Operating Officer, Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) and PhD Candidate, Living with Disability Research Centre
May 2024 (no seminar)		
June 2024	<i>Learning from deaths and serious harm: Reflections on quality, safeguarding</i>	Dr Alan Hough , Director at Purpose at Work and Adjunct Professor at La Trobe University

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		<i>Australian work health and safety enforcement regarding service provision to people with disabilities: Lessons for service providers</i>	Dr Dru Marsh , Senior Adjunct Lecturer, University of New South Wales		
		<i>Issues for WHS policymakers and regulators</i>			
	July 2024	<i>What Neoliberalism is and why it matters</i>	Professor Jennifer Clegg , Adjunct Professor, Living with Disability Research Centre		
		<i>How Neoliberal promotion of Voice, Choice and Work led the Royal Commission astray</i>	Dr Richard Lansdall-Welfare , Clinical Director and Consultant Psychiatrist		
	August 2024 (no seminar)				

New Publications and Presentations

New research publications by our staff at the Living with Disability Research Centre from second and third quarters of 2024.

Journal Articles

Bigby, C., Hough, A. (2024). Reading and reviewing Australia's Disability Commission Report and its impact on people with intellectual disabilities. *Research and Practice in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 11(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23297018.2024.2319365>

Evans, R., Douglas, J., Winkler, D., Cubis, L. (2024). Understanding the interaction between support and social participation for people with physical disabilities: A scoping review protocol. *BMJ Open*, 14(5), 532-553. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajs4.295>

Fox, D., Beadle-Brown, J., Bradshaw J., Bigby, C., Richardson, L. (2024). Organisational culture in 'better' group homes for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in England: A qualitative study. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 37(5). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.13270>

Hough, A. (2024). The Disability Royal Commission and the regulation of disability service provision. *Research and Practice in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 11(1), 39-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23297018.2024.2312530>

Logan, K., Iacono, T., Trembath, D. (2024). Aided Enhanced milieu teaching to

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123 100. <https://doi.org/10.1000/07404010.2020.2200000>

Spong, J., Iacono, T., Weise, J., Trollor, J., Spong, L., Lenten, T. (2024). Preparedness and training needs of a regional public mental health service to support people with intellectual disability. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*. Advance Online Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajr.13130>

Van Holstein, E., Wiesel, I, Bigby, C., Gleeson, B (2024). Repairing disability access in competitive environments: Drivers of inclusive service provision for people with intellectual disability. *Social & Cultural Geography*. Advance Online Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2024.2347892>

New Books

Clegg, J., Lansdall-Welfare, R. (2024). *Intellectual Disability in a Post-Neoliberal World*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-57945-5>

Conference Presentations

Araten-Bergman, T. (2024, August). **Supporting healthy ageing for people with intellectual disabilities in supported accommodation services: Staff experiences.** 17th International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSID) World Congress, Chicago, United States.

Bigby, C. (2024, August). **The nature and extent of Australian law and policy reform on supported decision making.** 17th International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSID) World Congress, Chicago, United States.

Bigby, C. (2024, August). **Common elements of good decision support practice and the scale of change required.** 17th International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSID) World Congress, Chicago, United States.

Bigby, C., & Jackson, A. (2024, August). **Family perspectives on group home experiences of their relative with severe intellectual disabilities.** 17th International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSID), World Congress Chicago, United States.

Humphreys, L., & Bigby, C. (2024, August). **Organisational Predictors of Staff Satisfaction in Australian Supported Accommodation Services.** 17th International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSID) World Congress, Chicago, United States.

Bigby, C., & Humphreys, L. (2024, August). **Influences on the strength of practice leadership in Australian supported accommodation services.** 17th International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSID) World Congress, Chicago, United States.

Humphreys, L., & Bigby, C. (2024, August). **Examining two elements of good Active Support using multilevel modelling.** 17th International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSID) World Congress, Chicago, United States.

Beadle-Brown, J., & Bigby, C. (2024, August). **Roundtable: What is needed to promote person-centred support and better quality of life outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the world. What role can research play in this?** 17th International Association for the

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Keynotes and Invited Presentations

Bigby, C. (2024, June). **Building research evidence to influence practice and policy**

Learnings from Active Support Research. Institute for Applied Behaviour Analysis, International Positive Practices Conference, Invited keynote.

Bigby, C. (2024). **Driving quality in supported accommodation.** National Disability Services, Vic State Conference, Invited keynote.

Bigby, C. (2024). **A flawed model or weak implementation.** A critique of the DRC's approach to group homes. DSC conference, Invited keynote.

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