

Disability Housing Options on the Sunshine Coast

Over the past twelve months the Compass Institute and Sundale Ltd have been working collaboratively to develop their ideas of delivering safe and secure housing options for people living with a disability on the Sunshine Coast. One of the catalysts for this work has come from the voice of parents who are concerned that as they get older they will have less capacity to support their children and the growing worry of what will happen to their children once they have gone. The core objective of this proposed model is to develop a housing solution that promotes independence for participants.

As a result of this work we have developed a model that will deliver housing outcomes for people with a disability living on the Sunshine Coast. Our vision is in keeping with the principles NDIS. We support the notion that the NDIS will provide necessary supports for daily living, but this system is not responsible for providing housing. We recognise that funds available through the NDIA will not meet the housing needs of all people with a disability. Knowing this, our model is focused on maximising opportunities for people with a disability to access the existing housing systems; including the private, public and social housing services.

Our idea for this model came as a result of the two not for profit organisations, Sundale and Compass Institute bringing their core businesses and passion for people together. Compass has been skilling Queenslanders with a disability since 1991 and Sundale has been building supportive communities for more than 50 years. Together we have developed this unique model that addresses both the needs of people with a disability and their parents. The two main ingredients of this program are:

- Giving participants the skills they need to live independently in the community, whilst giving parents and carers and community (including real estate agents) the confidence that our graduates can live independently, or with minimal support through both paid and natural supports.
- Providing housing outcomes using existing housing supports at the same time as drawing on business support to develop a local housing co-operative or trust structure that will ensure ongoing housing options for people with a disability on the coast..

Whilst we have the vision, demand and capacity to deliver we need to pilot the model to allow us to fine tune the training modules that have been delivered in other countries to ensure they work with our economic environments and support systems. We have also been work with the University of the Sunshine Coast and linked up with PhD students who will undertake the evaluation of the program, assessing participants' competence and provide an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of this services outcomes.

As the people with a disability are learning their new skills the parents/carers will be working separately to explore the housing options. This parent network would be supported to explore the housing options that are currently available. This could include:

- Working with real estate agencies and other housing providers to advocate that our graduates get access to private and social housing markets.
- Moving back may be a real outcome but we could look at parents hiring portable accommodation (subject to Council approvals) providing an additional stepping stone to independence.
- Looking at shared living arrangements.
- Advocating access to retirement village accommodation (if/where appropriate).
- Working with identified finance brokers to identify suitability of home purchase with parental/family supports.

- Participation and development of a new collective housing structure using; community, parental, business and philanthropic resources to get established and then grow. For example, two of the issues we have recognised in this element include:
 - Parents moving to a Retirement Village and giving their children access to their family homes that would be managed by the collective/trust.
 - Participants would lease from the trust that would offer more flexibility in the lease agreements so when necessary tenants can be moved quickly.

The initial stage of this pilot would include working with local parents, Disability Services Queensland and other service providers to identify a group of 5-6 individuals who will participate in the training centre. Compass has a strong reputation in training and assessing people with a disability, but their programs are currently limited to daily activities and employment. A new independent living training program that takes people out of their home and into an independent living environment will be developed to provide this training. It is expected that this pilot program will run over seven months. We are confident that these skills will increase the independence of the participant and reduce their demands on their carers and the social service systems.

A more permanent program would have the capacity to have people moving through the program at their own pace. For the next twelve months Sundale and Compass have the opportunity to access a suitable property with no lease commitments. This is perfect timing to test this innovative model and gather evidence; and undertake an independent assessment of this model in time for the roll out of the NDIS. This would assist Sunshine Coast's readiness to:

- Identify and deliver supports for people with a disability to live independently.
- Provide assistance to find and secure accommodation/housing options on the Coast.
- Identify effective and efficiency mechanisms of using rare funding resources.
- Develop pathways between NDIS funding and mainstream community and housing services operating in the area.

We are currently working on the costs of running the pilot program and the plan would be to look at using "block funding principles" for the pilot but to do a comparison against the catalogued service prices used in one of the NDIA trial sites.

The innovation in this proposal is three fold:

1. It is about gearing participants up to have access to a long term housing outcome that suits their capacity and financial circumstances.
2. This model is about supporting the aging parents of the people with a disability. Giving them peace of mind and access to services and support they may also need.
3. This model is about facilitating natural relationships in the community. Not all aspects of a person life should have a price attached, and we believe the time that people spend learning to live independently will give us the opportunity to match people into shared housing options with or without other participants.

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