



**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY

WHITE PAPER

# **LEADING DISABILITY RESEARCH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:**

A WESTERN SYDNEY COLLABORATION

**EASY READ**

**CITATION:**

Tracey, D., Mills, C., Mogensen, L., Avery, S., Bye, R., Cooper, H., Fava, G., Gillespie, A., Hastas, C., Johnston, C., Mach, K., Nketsia, W., Scobie, J., Staples, K., Turner, G., & Wilson, N. J. (2023). Leading disability research and workforce development: A Western Sydney collaboration. Western Sydney University.  
<https://doi.org/10.26183/5sqk-h090>

**ACCESSIBILITY:**

This white paper is available in an accessible version, please visit [https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research\\_theme\\_program/education\\_and\\_work](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/research_theme_program/education_and_work)

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

The development of this white paper was sponsored by the Western Sydney University Education and Work Research Theme.

**Acknowledgement of country:**

Western Sydney University acknowledges the peoples of the Darug, Tharawal, Eora and Wiradjuri nations. We acknowledge that the teaching, learning and research undertaken across our campuses continues the teaching, learning and research that has occurred on these lands for tens of thousands of years.

Western Sydney University 2023

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## WHAT IS A WHITE PAPER?

A white paper is a report or guide about a difficult issue.

A white paper

- Describes the difficult issue.
- Explains the problems.
- Presents some solutions.
- Suggests a plan.

## WHAT IS THIS WHITE PAPER ABOUT?

This white paper is about people with disability.

- It's about some of the challenges they meet, and
- about finding solutions.

The white paper shows that the lives of people with disability can be improved through:

- improving how research is done, and
- improving how workers are trained.

Disability is a part of being human and affects everyone differently.

Disability may affect the way:

- a person's body works,
- a person thinks,
- a person feels,
- a person communicates.

We know that many people with disability face difficulties and barriers in daily life. Barriers may include:

- Discrimination.
- Difficulties getting education, jobs, and healthcare.
- Being excluded from doing social activities.
- Being treated unfairly.

These difficulties and barriers mean that:

- people with disability miss out on opportunities that other people have.
- people with disability are more likely to be unemployed, poor, and unhealthy.

Good research and education of workers can help improve the lives of people with disability.

## WHY IS THIS ISSUE IMPORTANT?

About 16% of Australians have a disability.

School aged children with disability (80%) have more difficulties with:

- Learning at school.
- Doing activities at school like play or sport.
- Adults with disability are less likely to have a job.
- This can lead to poverty.

Many people with disability have difficulties getting the right health services. This could include:

- Seeing a doctor
- Seeing a dentist
- Seeing a therapist

People with disability are also more likely to:

- Be sad or worried and need mental health support.
- Be homeless.
- Be involved with the police.

People with disability who live in Western Sydney say they need more help in daily life than people in other parts of Sydney.

Families and caregivers of people with disability are very important in supporting people with disability, but

- The needs of carers are often ignored.
- Carers are more likely to be poor and lonely.
- This causes more difficulties.

## RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT

People with disability have the same rights to participation as others but sometimes they need more help.

In Australia, people with disability don't always experience equal rights and opportunities, but

Australia is now focusing more making things better for people with disability.

Some professionals like therapists and support workers are hard to find and keep.

The lack of workers means some people with disability don't get the help they need.

Universities are important in training future workers.

Many more NDIS participants will need support in the future.

Many more workers are required.

## **THERE ARE FOUR KEY CHALLENGES:**

### **1. Disability focused work does not involve enough people with disability.**

- Including people with disability in research and worker training can make it better and more helpful.

### **2. Disability combined with other things like gender, ethnicity, or poverty, can make things harder.**

- We need better ways to include different people with disability in research, work, and education.

### **3. Researchers and educators should work to make life better for people with disability.**

- Research should be useful in real life, not just on paper.
- Universities should involve the disability community to make courses more practical.

### **4. Different groups who support disability don't work together well:**

- Different departments need to work together to make things fair for everyone and include people with disability.
- Hospitals, health centres, and schools should learn more about supporting people with disability.
- Researchers who study disability should work with companies and communities to find better ways to help.

## **HOW WE LEAD THE WAY IN WESTERN SYDNEY:**

Western Sydney University works with disability organisations and communities on disability issues.

Western Sydney University researchers and the community support people with disability.

Western Sydney University is a leader in research and education for people with disability.

Western Sydney University's work makes a big difference in important goals for the world, set by the United Nations.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Our team has identified 7 areas to work on in the future:

1

Help people with disability become strong leaders in research and education.

2

Make Western Sydney University a good example of great disability research and education.

3

Do important research that helps to make good rules and actions on disability issues.

4

Create a model of teaching future workers in disability services.

5

Make sure more researchers work with people with disability in their research.

6

Make sure universities include people with disability in the university community.

7

Work together with communities so they know about disability and treat people with disability fairly.



## WHO IS INVOLVED IN THIS WHITE PAPER?

Our team has researchers, educators, and people with disability.

Email us to connect.



### PROFESSOR DANIELLE TRACEY

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Danielle is a psychologist who does teaching and research focused on supporting people with disability and communities.



### DR CAROLINE MILLS

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Caroline is an occupational therapist who does research on disability with children and adults. She teaches about working with children and adults with disability.



### ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LISE MOGENSEN

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Lise does research on disability with children and adults, and she teaches medical students to do research. She is a parent advocate of a young man with disability.



### ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SCOTT AVERY

Scott is an indigenous researcher who is deaf. His work aims to improve disability inclusion in communities.

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**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ROSALIND BYE**

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Ros is an occupational therapist and a leader of other occupational therapists. She does teaching and research in occupational therapy in health and disability.

**HARRISON COOPER**

Harry has completed a traineeship and hopes for a career in the retail sector.

**GRACE FAVA OAM**

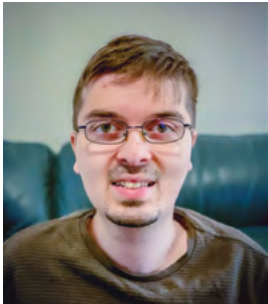
Grace is the CEO of a disability organisation and a parent of two boys with disability.

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**ANGELA GILLESPIE**

Angela is an early childhood teacher and leader who is interested in ensuring all young children receive a high quality education.

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### **CHRISTOPHER HASTAS**

Chris is a PhD student and teacher in the school of Social Sciences. He is interested in improving the lives and participation of people with disability.



### **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR CHRISTINE JOHNSTON**

Christine is an early childhood educator who is interested in supporting young children with disability to get the best services to support them.

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### **KITTY MACH**

Kitty is a provisional psychologist with lived experience of disability who is committed to supporting people with disability.



### **DR WILLIAM NKETSIA**

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William is a teacher who is interested in ensuring students with disability receive an education, no matter who or where they are.

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**JEFF SCOBIE**

Jeff is the CEO of a disability organisation, and his work aims to improve how services are delivered to support people with disability.

**KERRY STAPLES**

Kerry is a teacher who is focused on improving inclusive education for young children with disability in early childhood education.

**DR GEORGE TURNER**

George is a social worker who is interested in improving sexual health for people with disability through teaching and research.

**PROFESSOR NATHAN WILSON**

Nathan is a nurse who teaches about disability and does research.

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