



**Supporting the effective design of services  
for Aboriginal people with disabilities in  
remote areas of northern South Australia  
(June 2016)**

**Project Summary for Lifetime Support Authority and  
National Disability Insurance Agency**

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## 1. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research project was to support the effective design of services for Aboriginal people with disabilities in remote areas of northern South Australia. The region that is the focus of the research corresponds to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. The research aimed to generate greater knowledge on:

- i. The perceptions and attitudes towards disability of people living in the APY Lands.
- ii. How these perceptions and attitudes can drive innovation for the design and delivery of services by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and Lifetime Support Authority (LSA).
- iii. Practical advice from local community members on their ideas of what the optimal kinds of support for people with a disability in their community could be.
- iv. Local understandings of the concept of recovery, given that participants may have very serious injuries where improvement is gradual, gaining entry back into normal community life and activities.
- v. Suggestions on approaches to enhance involvement and participation of clients of disability services in the community.
- vi. Other topics that emerge from the interviews and that are relevant to the design and development of services.

## 2. Methodology

The Aboriginal Community Researcher team of Ninti One conducted a survey of Anangu in two selected communities, Pukatja and Amata, in order to capture perspectives and insights of Aboriginal people with disabilities and their carers. Although our leading method was interviewing through semi-structured and open-ended questioning, we also made use of ethnographic methods, such as observation, examples and stories as a means of exploring the lives, interests and priorities of people with disabilities and their carers in the APY Lands. Specific themes explored through the research include: access to services; access to facilities; interaction with service providers; community perceptions of people with disabilities; the contribution of families; and approaches to improving services.

## 3. Findings

The research gathered the views of people with disabilities, their carers and other relevant individuals living on the APY Lands in a way that has not been attempted before. The result is a collection of honest, direct voices on aspects of disability that the report sought to present in a way that is true to the intent of each person. We found that participants in the study have much to say and many experiences to share drawn from sometimes decades of living with one or more disabilities. We wish to acknowledge the openness with which so many people shared their knowledge with the Ninti One research team.

The full project report includes detailed analysis against the research objectives and 12 recommendations relevant to the design of future services for people with disabilities and their carers. Shortcomings and inconsistencies in care and the vulnerability of individual people are particularly important and require priority attention. The role of respite support, improved cross-cultural knowledge and practice, better education and awareness of disability across the population and ways better to meet the aspirations of people with disabilities are among many topics relevant to future service design and improvement.