

# Services Our Way Project Plan

June 2013

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# Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
1.1 Policy and service context .....	1
1.2 Services Our Way .....	3
1.3 Services Our Way Evaluation .....	4
2. Evaluation Framework.....	5
2.1 Evaluation framework .....	5
2.2 Evaluation questions.....	6
2.3 Phases of the evaluation .....	7
3. Methodology.....	12
3.1 Data collection methods .....	12
3.2 Sampling.....	14
3.3 Inclusivity .....	15
3.4 Analysis and reporting .....	16
4. Project management .....	17
4.1 Project schedule .....	17
4.2 Governance .....	18
4.3 Ethics.....	18
4.4 Communication plan .....	19
4.5 Risk management.....	20

## Abbreviations

ADHC	NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care
AH&MRC	Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales (AH&MRC)
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme (now DisabilityCare Australia)
NSW	New South Wales
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNSW	University of New South Wales

# 1. Introduction

The Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) has been commissioned by the NSW Department of Families and Community Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) to conduct an evaluation of the Services Our Way program in Nowra. Services Our Way is a new ADHC service model designed to build the capacity of Aboriginal people<sup>1</sup> to access disability services and encourage self-directed support.

This Services Our Way Project Plan has been prepared in consultation with ADHC staff, the Advisory Group, and June Riemer (Aboriginal Disability Network). The plan includes:

- Policy and service context for Services Our Way (Section 1)
- Evaluation framework - including program logic, evaluation questions, and phases of the evaluation (Section 2)
- Methodology - analysis of program data, interviews and gathering stories, workshops/interviews with other stakeholders, sampling, inclusivity and analysis reporting (Section 3)
- Project management - including key deliverables, ethics and risk management (Section 4).

## 1.1 Policy and service context

Australian states and territories are responsible for the provision of services to people with disability. Services are subject to federal legislation and national service standards. Funding is from federal and state governments. In 1998 the NSW Government announced the first phase of Stronger Together (ADHC 2006), a 10-year-plan for disability services, followed by the second phase Stronger Together 2 (ADHC 2011b) policy direction for disability services in NSW.

Both policies identify the need to improve outcomes for people with disability by delivering more person-centred planning, services and supports. Stronger Together focuses on increasing opportunities for people to exercise more choice and control over their supports and funding arrangements. It also adopts the lifespan approach by developing long-term pathways through the service system. This includes early intervention and prevention strategies which improve the outcomes of people with disability, while reducing costs to the disability service system. Self-directed policies

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<sup>1</sup> The evaluation team recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are the Indigenous peoples of Australia. The use of the term Aboriginal in this document refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for ease of read.

promote greater individual control over support, will empower people with all types of disability (Hutchison et al. 2006; Leece 2010; Mahoney et al. 2007; Stainton & Boyce 2004; Stevens et al. 2011), and can improve outcomes (Glendinning et al. 2008; Baxter et al. 2011; Leece 2010; Stainton 2002). The principles underpinning self-directed support are consistent with principles of self-determination and empowerment for Indigenous peoples, including people with disability. They aim to maximise people's control over their lives and are consistent with the principles of autonomy, freedom to make one's own choices and independence of persons included in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD).

State policy developments go hand in hand with the federal policy context. In October 2011, at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), all Ministers agreed to reform disability services in Australia through the implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (now known as DisabilityCare Australia) by mid-2013. The aim of DisabilityCare Australia is to ensure better pathways to timely, flexible, affordable, quality care and support for people with disability. Furthermore in 2011 COAG released the 10-year National Disability Strategy (COAG 2011) which is aimed at a sustainable disability support system which is person-centred and self-directed, and which maximises opportunities for independence and participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the community.

In September 2010, the NSW Ombudsman identified areas where ADHC's service delivery to Aboriginal people can be strengthened (NSW Ombudsman 2010). While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have high rates of disability, their use of services is low and services are often not culturally competent or individualized. Aboriginal people are one and a half times more likely to have a disability than non-Aboriginal people (NSW Ombudsman 2010). At the Services Our Way site in Northern NSW, ADHC reported that 95 per cent of Aboriginal people with disability previously did not access disability services (ADHC personal correspondence). The Aboriginal Consultation Strategy (ADHC 2005a) and the Aboriginal Policy Framework (ADHC 2005b) aim to provide a platform to develop strategies and programs for Aboriginal clients and communities that are culturally appropriate. The Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Framework 2011–2015 (ADHC 2011a) has been developed since the introduction of the Services Our Way program and provides a new model of accountability for the delivery of programs and services to older Aboriginal people, Aboriginal people with a disability, their carers and families.

Services Our Way is a new ADHC service model designed to build the capacity of Aboriginal people to access disability services and encourage self-directed support. The Services Our Way program implements the NSW Stronger Together program. It does this through encouraging self-directed support, supporting the recommendations of the NSW Ombudsman report 'Improving service delivery to Aboriginal People with a disability', and implementing the ADHC Aboriginal Consultation Strategy and Aboriginal Policy Framework (ADHC 2005a; 2005b).

The Services Our Way pilot program and evaluation is influenced by the following conceptual paradigms:

- The entitlements of people with disability and their families to community connections and social, economic and cultural participation
- The human rights of people with disability to ensure that their preferences and desires are central to the services they receive
- Decolonising research methodologies, which emphasise the importance of democratising the research process, respecting and learning from Indigenous ways of knowing, and the principles of reciprocity and shared ownership.

## 1.2 Services Our Way

Services Our Way is a culturally appropriate Aboriginal family intensive support package program developed to address the relatively low rates at which Aboriginal people access ADHC direct and funded services. Services Our Way acknowledges the importance of culturally appropriate service delivery. This approach facilitates building of family capacity to plan current and future needs, strengthens formal and informal supports, increases Aboriginal people's access to disability services, and improves general quality of life. A key component of Services Our Way is that it is an Aboriginal program delivered by Aboriginal Service Support Specialists for Aboriginal people with a disability and their families. Aboriginal people with a disability and their families are able to choose how much help they get from Aboriginal Support Service Specialists in terms of the level of support and assistance. An Aboriginal Service Support Specialist is available to provide as much or as little support as desired until the client exists of transitions off the program.<sup>2</sup>

Services Our Way was launched in Nowra, in the NSW Shoalhaven Local Government Area in 2010 under the NSW Stronger Together 1 program and has since been extended to other launch sites in NSW (Northern NSW, Mt. Druitt, Tamworth); the program will eventually be implemented state-wide. Under the program, 180 packages are available (each package is \$50k). Ten packages are available in Nowra and have provided support to families of 46 people with disability (as at May 2013).

The program aims to increase the rate at which Aboriginal people access ADHC's disability programs and services (through capacity building), encourage self-directed support, and improve the way in which Aboriginal people are engaged through culturally appropriate, person-centred and individualised support. This includes the

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<sup>2</sup> Source: ADHC Tender Details, RFT number ADHC 12.09: Services Our Way – Southern Region – Program Evaluation.

use of Aboriginal Service Support Specialists, flexibility in service delivery, and planning and delivering services in an integrated way.

The objective of Services Our Way is to build individual capacity to enable people to transition to other services in a culturally appropriate way. The program minimises the number of disability support organisations that people with disability accessing the program have to engage with, and uses storytelling, rather than an assessment tool, to identify support needs. In Nowra, the Place Manager and two Aboriginal Service Support Specialists implement the program and assess, plan and deliver services to help engage with and build the capacity of the Aboriginal families to transition to other disability services.

### 1.3 Services Our Way Evaluation

The evaluation of Services Our Way will be conducted in two phases to assess the outcomes of the program in Nowra both in terms of extending the program locally and improving the program for the benefit of other sites, leading to the eventual roll out of the program state-wide.

- Phase I – Design Phase: the evaluation team will learn about the Services Our Way program and business model in order to develop a culturally informed and relevant evaluation, and support the capacity building of local staff to become part of the research team. (see Section 2.3.1)
- Phase II – Fieldwork and analysis of program data: the evaluation team will engage with people who have or are using the scheme (using two waves of interviews), as well as community groups and other stakeholders. Phase II will also include program data analysis to establish how the program is used by these families and to identify how the program engages with the wider group of Aboriginal people with disability in the local community. (see Section 2.3.2)

The evaluation will inform an assessment of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the Services Our Way program in a final report.

## 2. Evaluation Framework

### 2.1 Evaluation framework

The Services Our Way program is designed to meet the service delivery needs of Aboriginal people and their families through culturally appropriate, person-centred and individualised support. The evaluation will address the following objectives:

- Analyse impacts on quality of life for Aboriginal people with a disability and their families
- Analyse the capacity to expand the program
- Analyse whether there is evidence of program recipients building capacity to self manage and transition to other disability services
- Gather of qualitative and quantitative data, and
- Use of storytelling to capture people's experiences.

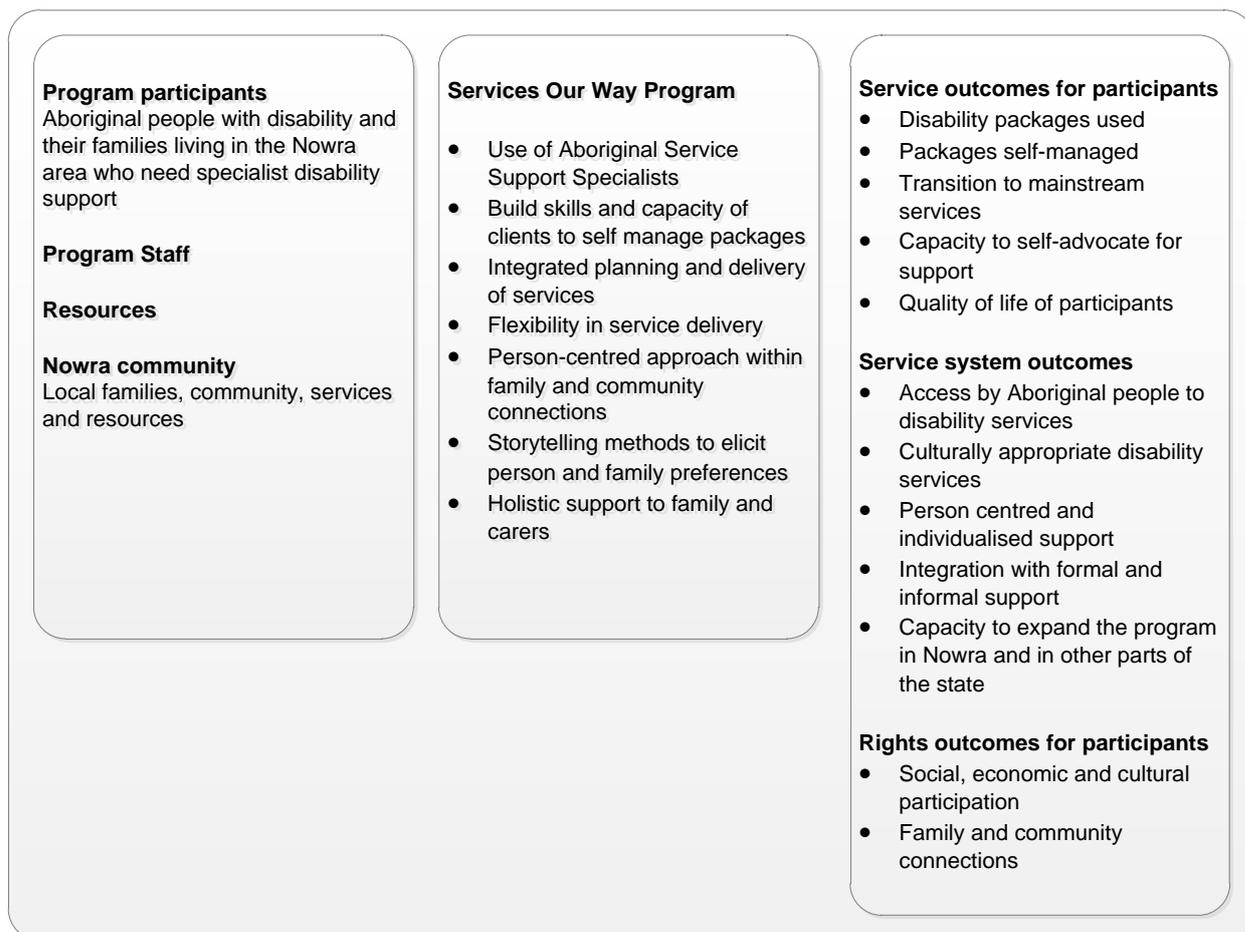
The research will evaluate the degree to which it has achieved the first three objectives. The last two objectives will be used to guide the methods to meet the first three objectives.

That is, the evaluation will gather qualitative and quantitative data, and use storytelling to capture people's program experiences. This will be done through interviewing participants in two waves, and analysing information from ADHC staff (interviews, workshops and program data), community organisations, and other stakeholders to reduce participant burden.

The evaluation will provide information to ADHC on the capacity to expand the program in the area, and whether any adjustments should be made to the program, it is important to consider the outcomes for participants and the system. Considering the outcomes will provide important insights on participant's quality of life, the capacity of participants to self-manage and transition to other services, and the capacity to expand the program. The outcomes that are important to consider are built into the program logic (

Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1: Program logic for Services Our Way (Nowra) evaluation**



The evaluation takes a multi-method approach, combining program data, workshops with ADHC staff and other stakeholders, and interviews with Services Our Way participants. The evaluation also involves capacity building of ADHC staff in disability and Indigenous research methods, and evaluation methods for program improvement in the future as part of service delivery. The evaluation approach is established in consultation with the Advisory Group for Services Our Way and June Riemer. More information about these approaches is included in the following sections.

## 2.2 Evaluation questions

On the basis of the objectives, and the program logic (detailed in Section 2.1 above), the following evaluation questions will be used to guide the evaluation design and analysis:

1. What impacts has Services Our Way had on the quality of life of those Aboriginal people with disability and their family who have accessed the program?

- a) How and to what extent has Services Our Way changed rights outcomes for Aboriginal people with disability and families (social, economic and cultural participation; family and community connections)?
2. What capacity does Services Our Way have to expand?
    - a) What have been the facilitators and barriers to outcomes for participants, service outcomes and service system change?
    - b) How and to what extent has Services Our Way been implemented as planned and/or been adapted and responsive to needs and preferences of Services Our Way participants?
    - c) How and to what extent does Services Our Way reach, engage with and respond to the needs of local Aboriginal people with disability and their families, such as variation by age, location, household and support needs? What were the facilitators and barriers to accessing the Services Our Way program?
  3. What capacity have program participants gained to self-manage and transition to other disability services:
    - a) How and to what extent has Services Our Way changed service outcomes for Aboriginal people with disability and families (disability packages used; transition to mainstream services; capacity to self-advocate for support)?
    - b) How and to what extent has Services Our Way changed service system outcomes (access to disability services, culturally appropriate disability services; person centred and individualised support; integration with formal and informal support)?

These questions are for the purpose of guiding the evaluation design and analysis, and will not be directly used as the interview questions. The method for the evaluation is outlined below.

## 2.3 Phases of the evaluation

SPRC worked closely with ADHC to refine the objectives, questions and research methodology for the evaluation. To minimise respondent burden and to maximise the natural opportunities available for data collection through the Services Our Way program, a strategy will be developed for collecting program data for the evaluation and to gather information from other stakeholders such as service providers. The Project Plan will be finalised in agreement with ADHC and the Advisory Group; SPRC will report against key milestones as indicated in Section 4.1.

The design of this evaluation includes input from June Riemer of the Aboriginal Disability Network to ensure that the approach is culturally appropriate. Research instruments, such as guides for interviews, will be drafted in consultation with ADHC staff, the project Advisory Group and other key stakeholders.

### 2.3.1 Phase I: Design

Phase I, the design phase of the project, will consist of:

- A literature review
- Refining the project plan and evaluation questions with ADHC and the Advisory Group
- Learning more about the Services Our Way program (program documentation and workshop with staff)
- Drafting evaluation instruments (e.g. topic guides for interviews)
- Applying for ethics approval

#### **Literature review**

We will conduct a review of the literature to collate information about current programs and national and international conceptualisation and practice relating to evaluation of the policy and service context of Services Our Way. This will build on the literature used by ADHC to prepare the evaluation brief and will include evaluation of disability service and support needs, experience of good support and gaps in support and service models. This information will be used to inform the scope and focus of the research questions and objectives and to design the fieldwork methods and instruments. The literature review will include academic and grey literature in English language published in the last 10 years.

#### **Refining the project plan**

The project plan will be refined and agreed to through the following process:

- SPRC, ADHC and the Advisory Group will discuss and verify:
  - the draft project plan, including the evaluation questions
  - key milestones, and
  - identify any potential risks to the project.

- SPRC will seek feedback from June Riemer of the First People's Disability Network (Australia).
- ADHC will provide final approval of the project plan prior to submission to ethics.

### **Learning about the Services Our Way program**

To learn about the Services Our Way program, and how families and individuals engage with and participate in the program, SPRC will:

- review program documentation provided by ADHC
- conduct a workshop with staff to discuss how the program works in practice – this may also identify opportunities for capacity building.

The evaluation will build on the experience and expertise of local staff responsible for implementing the Services Our Way program and increase their capacity for program improvement. As was discussed between SPRC and ADHC at the project initiation meeting, there is scope within this workshop to include staff from other Services Our Way program sites.

### **Drafting evaluation instruments and data requirements**

Evaluation instruments and data requirements will be drafted based on the information gathered from the Advisory group, the review of program documentation, and discussions with key staff. The evaluation instruments and data requirements will include:

- themes and questions for interviews, and
- program data requirements (e.g. who uses the program, their characteristics, what services they use, their outcomes).

SPRC will work closely with ADHC and the Advisory Group members to draft the evaluation instruments and data requirements.

### **Applying for ethics approval**

SPRC will seek ethics approval from the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales (AH&MRC), which is registered with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). The ethics application will be submitted in consultation with ADHC and local Aboriginal Community Organisations (see Section 4.3). SPRC will include any evaluation instruments in the application.

The next submission deadline for the AH&MRC is 30 September 2013 for their meeting on 14 October 2013. SPRC will submit the application as early as possible in order to minimise delays.

### 2.3.2 Phase II: Fieldwork and analysis of program data

Phase II of the project will include:

- Fieldwork interviews, gathering stories and case studies
- Review of program data
- Analysis and reporting against the evaluation questions.

#### **Fieldwork interviews, gathering stories and case studies**

Fieldwork interviews, including gathering stories and case studies will be conducted on receipt of ethics approval. This will include two waves of interviews:

##### *Wave One*

Wave one will include:

- Interviews with families
- Interviews with ADHC staff, including managers and directors as relevant.

##### *Wave Two*

Wave two will include:

- Follow up interviews with families who were interviewed in Wave One
- Workshops with other key stakeholders, e.g. community services and organisations
- Workshop with ADHC staff to discuss findings.

If a larger sample is required, ADHC staff can provide additional interviews or case studies for the analysis.

#### **Review of program data**

Program data will be reviewed, analysed and evaluated against the evaluation questions. If available, program data will be provided by ADHC and will include

information on: who uses the program; their characteristics and needs; what services they use; their goals, achievements and other outcomes; and costs.

Each of these components is discussed in further detail in the methodology section of this report (Section 3).

### **Analysis and Reporting**

After the first wave of interviews (Wave One), a draft interim evaluation report will be prepared and submitted to ADHC and the Advisory Group for comment and feedback. The draft interim report will include:

- methodology used (discussion of indigenous research methods and analysis)
- consultation schedule
- findings from first wave of interviews (including the presentation of at least one case study if available), and
- the discussion of implications of findings for evaluation and program.

At the completion of Phase II, a draft final report will be submitted to ADHC for comment and feedback. The report will include:

- an executive summary
- implications for improved service delivery of Services Our Way family intensive support packages across New South Wales.
- methodology (including discussion of indigenous research methods and analysis), and
- findings from all data collected throughout the project (including presentation of case studies).

Plain English copies will be made available to the public and people who took part in the evaluation (see Section 3.4).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Data collection methods

#### 3.1.1 Program data

Program data will be used to provide a context for the evaluation including information on demographics, characteristics, needs, goals and achievements of people using the scheme, as well as how the Services Our Way packages have been spent (service use, cost). ADHC has asked all program participants for permission to use any data collected during their use of the program for the purpose of this evaluation in a de-identified form. A copy of this consent form will be provided with the ethics application.

ADHC will provide the research team with deidentified data for the purposes of the evaluation. The data will be analysed against the evaluation objectives and against other datasets available for the group of participants, such as number of Aboriginal people in Nowra with a disability, by type.

The data will be used to triangulate feedback from the interviews with Services Our Way participants. In particular, the data will be used to demonstrate whether the Services Our Way program has been used across the community, or just by small parts – for example, based on disability type or age.

#### 3.1.2 Interviews, gathering stories and case studies with Services Our Way participants

Interviews will be conducted with a small sample of people in Phase II of the evaluation. The sample will include both people with disability and family members. As indicated in Section 2.3.3, this will be a repeat longitudinal sample (i.e. two waves of interviews). The second wave of interviews will occur approximately three months after the first wave.

Interviews will be conducted face-to-face, and participants will be given choices about:

- When and where the interview occurs (i.e. in their home or another location, and the time of day).
- How they would like to be interviewed
- Who can be present in the interviews (i.e. whether they would prefer someone else to be present, e.g. family member, friend, or with an Aboriginal Service Support Specialist; and who they would prefer to conduct the

interview – a researcher (Aboriginal or not), an Aboriginal Service Support Specialist or both )

The interview could take the form of a talking circle where two talking circles are held with program participants, families and other relevant stakeholders.

1. The first circle will involve an open conversation about the participants and families experiences of the program. Stories from these talking circles will be gathered into themes to form the basis of a tool to evaluate the experiences of those supported by the Services Our Way program.
2. Where feasible and possible, a second circle will revisit the themes identified in the first circle, and identify program innovation and participants' needs around these themes.

Recruitment will occur at arm's-length through ADHC staff.

Interviews will focus on the use story telling. This will be guided across a number of themes informed by the program logic and to address the evaluation questions, including:

- Who they are
- How they entered the Services Our Way program, how easy/hard was it, what helped/didn't help them access the program
- What help was provided whilst they were part of this program
- What has happened since – are they still using any services (disability packages; mainstream services; culturally appropriate disability services; capacity to self-advocate and self-manage support)
- Whether their lives and their families lives have changed as a result – social, economic and cultural participation; family and community connections
- Whether they feel in a better position to use services in the future (in terms of having better capacity)

The interviews will give participants the opportunity to provide a narrative about their experience managing their disability and the impact the Services Our Way program has had. In particular:

- how it has impacted on their quality of life and
- whether it has or will help them to self-manage their care and transition to other disability services in the future.

The interviews will also seek information about how Services Our Way operates and the capacity to expand the Services Our Way program across the state.

If Services Our Way staff are comfortable with the process and the families agree, the interviews can be supplemented with case study profiles of additional people who have used the program. This can increase the sample size and provide further opportunities for staff and families to participate in the evaluation, therefore capturing a wider range of information and experiences of the program and outcomes. Case study information can be gathered through participatory methodologies including storytelling, visual data, case files and self-reporting.

### 3.1.3 Workshops or interviews with other stakeholders

During Phase I and II, the research team may identify other stakeholders, such as service providers, to contribute to the evaluation. Interviews with other stakeholders will provide another perspective and minimise the burden on scheme participants. Interviews with other stakeholders will examine:

- the evaluation questions related to the service system outcomes
- the impact of the program on other disability and related service providers and the local Aboriginal community, and
- the capacity to expand the program outside of Nowra.

Interviews or workshops will also be carried out with the Place Managers, the Aboriginal Service Support Specialists as well as senior ADHC staff (Deputy Regional Director, Senior Access Management, and Southern Regional Executive).

## 3.2 Sampling

**Table 3.1: Sampling**

	Total
Program data	All families that have or are participating in Services Our Way in Nowra
Interviews – Aboriginal people with disability and their families who access Services Our Way	12 (two waves of interviews; 24 in total)
Interviews – service providers and Aboriginal community	5
Case studies collected by Services Our Way staff	As available

Sampling for the interviews will include a range of people with different characteristics, in order to explore the implications of Services Our Way across the population of people that have accessed the program: age, gender, disability type and level of support needs, and whether they have just accessed, exited or are a long term user of the program.

### 3.3 Inclusivity

The Services Our Way evaluation will be conducted from a strong inclusive framework and consistent with the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research, published by the National Health and Medical Research Council. The evaluation will be accessible and culturally competent.

#### 3.3.1 Accessibility

The team will ensure that the evaluation is accessible to people with high support needs and severe disabilities.

A range of Indigenous research methodologies and disability inclusive methods will be used in the interviews to engage participants in a way that is respectful of their cultural and support needs. These may include:

- Storytelling, more than one meeting if required
- Talking circles and participant and family discussions
- A trusted person or known supporter present at the interview
- The inclusion of a range of visual or other communication aids in the interview process.

By providing a variety of options for people with disabilities to communicate with the research team, the evaluation can be responsive to the communication preferences of a range of participants. This also means that the evaluation will be informed by a diverse group of participants, ensuring a more holistic view of program experiences.

#### 3.3.2 Cultural considerations

In accordance with best practice principals for conducting Indigenous research, this evaluation will seek ongoing advice and guidance to ensure the project meets the standards of culturally competent methods. Throughout the course of the evaluation June Riemer, from the Aboriginal Disability Network, will provide ongoing advice to the project team. Her role will be to provide advice on:

- The context of the evaluation in terms of Aboriginal people's access to disability services

- The engagement of Aboriginal people with disability in the evaluation
- The development of accessible research instruments
- The research findings which will contribute to the report

June will also be assisted in this task by members of the Advisory Group who are representing the Nowra Local Aboriginal Land Council and the South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation.

### 3.4 Analysis and reporting

Qualitative data (e.g. interview transcripts) will be analysed thematically, against the research questions and in terms of program and policy implications. Quantitative data (e.g. program data) will be analysed using SPSS or another standard statistical analysis software such as Stata.

A final report will be produced for ADHC. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data, this report will examine the effectiveness and appropriateness of the Services Our Way program against the evaluation questions and describe the implications for both expansion in the Nowra area as well as implications for the rest of the State.

The report will include:

- A summary of the methodology used (including discussion of Indigenous research methods and analysis)
- A summary of the participants in the evaluation (de-identified), including Services Our Way program participants and other stakeholders
- Findings from all data collected throughout project (including presentation of case studies)
- Program analysis and recommendations.

## 4. Project management

### 4.1 Project schedule

The evaluation is expected to be completed by April 2014 (Table 4.1: ). All deliverables will be presented in draft form to ADHC to provide comments on prior their finalisation. . With the agreement and permission of ADHC, the results will be submitted for national and international publication to contribute to the evidence base on increasing access to disability services for Aboriginal people.

**Table 4.1: Research activities and timeframe**

Phase and deliverable	Activity	Date due
1. <b>Phase 1: Design</b> (Project Plan)	Sign contract	April
	Project initiation meeting with ADHC	May
	Draft Project Plan	June
	Workshop with Services Our Way staff in Nowra	Sept
	Draft evaluation instruments	Sept
	Finalise Project Plan	Sept
	Submit ethics application to AH&MRC	Sept for Oct
2. <b>Phase II: Fieldwork</b>	Conduct and analyse in-depth interviews (wave 1)*	Dec
	Analyse program data	
	Staff and stakeholder workshops	
	Analysis against evaluation objectives	2014
	Draft interim evaluation report	Jan
	Conduct repeat interviews (wave 2)	Feb-Mar
	Analysis	
Final report	Draft final report	April
	Seek feedback from ADHC and Advisory group	2014
	Final report	April
	Propose academic outputs	2014
	Presentation	

\* start date based on ethics approval being granted at the October AH&MRC HREC meeting

## 4.2 Governance

The project will be managed in accordance with UNSW and SPRC project management processes and procedures. A dedicated and experienced project manager, Shona Bates, will work alongside Chief Investigator Rosemary Kayess to ensure that the project is delivered to time, budget, and quality. Their role will be to develop the project plan, identify and monitor risks to the project, and report to NSW ADHC on progress against key milestones. The research team is detailed in full in Table 4.2:

**Table 4.2: Research team**

Responsibility	Researcher
Chief Investigator	Rosemary Kayess
Research design, fieldwork, analysis, reporting	Shona Bates Charlotte Smedley Margaret Raven BJ Newton Deborah Lutz June Riemer (Aboriginal Disability Network)
Adviser	Karen Fisher

### **Advisory Group**

A project advisory group has been established to ensure that key stakeholders in Services Our Way have an opportunity to contribute to the design, implementation and review the findings of this research. Membership will include members from ADHC Strategic Change, the Aboriginal Services Our Way team, 1 or 2 previous participants of the program, the SPRC research team outlined in Table 4.2 above, and two local community groups (the South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation and the Nowra Local Aboriginal Land Council). This will ensure that there is Aboriginal community control over all aspects of the proposed research.

## 4.3 Ethics

UNSW is committed to the highest standard of integrity in research. All human research activities are governed by the principles outlined in The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. The University's Code of Conduct for the Responsible Practice of Research sets out the obligations by which all University researchers must abide, including confidentiality, freedom to withdraw, privacy and voluntary participation.

The project team recognises the time constraints that accompany this ethics process, but given that the historical risks of inappropriate research methodologies, it is critical to gain the support of both the community and the AH&MRC of NSW.

Prior to participation in the research, all participants will be provided with clear, accessible information about participating in the research, voluntary consent to participate (with continuous opportunities to withdraw from the research), respect for individuals' rights and dignity, reimbursement for participation expenses and confidentiality. Participants will also be informed that they can decide at any time to withdraw from the study, during or after their interview, by revoking their consent.

A protocol for developing an ethical research environment and responding to participant risk will be designed before fieldwork begins. If participants agree, responses will be recorded for accuracy and transcription. All identifiable data will be de-identified in any publications resulting from this research. Data from this research will be kept in secure storage at the SPRC, viewed only by the research team for the purpose of the research and destroyed after seven years.

Researchers responsible for carrying out the fieldwork component of the study have undertaken research with Aboriginal people, and people with disability, their families and service providers.

## 4.4 Communication plan

**Table 4.3: Communication strategy**

Communication to	Form	Frequency
Project manager, governance groups	Written reports, meetings, phone, email, presentations	Start and finish of each Phase and as required
People with disability and their families	Written summaries of plan and progress inviting input distributed through ADHC	Start and finish of each Phase and as required, after approval
Other interested persons or organisations	Written summaries of plan and progress inviting input on SPRC website and elsewhere as agreed with ADHC	After each Phase after approval

At critical stages of engagement we will confirm the research methods and tools with the ADHC project manager. There will be meetings with the ADHC team to discuss an overview of the project, the context and schedule further meetings with the Project Manager and Advisory Group, to ensure a common understanding of the requirements of the project, coordinate the project design and discuss the draft methodology. Throughout the project, we will liaise regularly with ADHC to design a methodology and analysis that addresses the needs of the evaluation.

## 4.5 Risk management

Potential risks that may impact on the management of the research and collection of data are summarised in Table 4.4.

Conducting this research is contingent on permission being granted by the Nowra Aboriginal Community and the AH&MRC Higher Research Ethics Committee. The AH&MRC Committee meets every two months and will not meet again until October 2013. We have contacted the secretariat who has advised us that we can submit the ethics application prior to the meeting to facilitate the assessment of the application prior to the meeting. We will ensure that the application is comprehensive and addresses all of the requirements of the Committee and addresses any questions raised by the local community.

We are both adaptable and flexible in our research design to accommodate any delays brought about by the ethics process; we have concentrated all fieldwork and analysis that would fall within the ethics process to the second phase of the project.

**Table 4.4: Risk management**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Solution</b>
Psychological distress or other harm to people with disability or families	Low	High	The evaluation team are experienced fieldworkers and will stringently design recruitment and data collection procedures to ensure minimal burden and distress. Follow up and referral processes will be identified and made available to anyone showing any distress.
Failure to engage participants and stakeholders	Low	High	The evaluation team will work actively with ADHC, the Advisory Board and other key stakeholders. The research team is highly experienced in recruiting hard to engage participants. We will provide incentive payments for clients and their families.
Project exceeds specific timeline	Medium	Moderate	Delays in gaining ethics approval present a risk to this project; however, SPRC will divide the evaluation process into two phases in order to ensure that work continues whilst we await ethics approval. The project manager will liaise regularly with ADHC to ensure timely resolution of any project issues.
Poor communication between evaluation team and ADHC	Low	High	SPRC team members have a long history of working with each other and with government departments, disability organisations and Indigenous communities.
Research does not adhere to budget	Low	High	The budget represents excellent value for money as the evaluation team has valuable expertise. The budget is based on previous experience of similar projects, all of which have reported on time and within budget. The risk is borne by SPRC.
Research design does not meet the policy needs of people with disability, government and service providers	Low	High	The evaluation team is highly experienced in designing robust evaluations that produce accurate and accessible findings useful in guiding policy development. The team will develop a dissemination strategy in collaboration with ADHC and other stakeholders to ensure that findings inform practice and enhance policy.
Data gaps	Med	Low	The team named for this evaluation have particular expertise in Indigenous methodologies and disability services, as well as in designing data collection instruments to provide sufficient data. Analysis will be conducted concurrently with data collection and collection instruments will be modified in any gaps are identified.
Research team fails to work effectively	Low	Low	The team identified for this project have worked together successfully on many evaluation and research projects. This project will build on this history of successful teamwork.

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Services Our Way Project Plan

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