

Towards an accessible society

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 promotes an inclusive society where everybody has the same opportunities.

Deakin University's research is supporting the Strategy's vision for a more inclusive and accessible society where all people with disability can fulfil their potential as equal members of the community.

Our researchers work in tandem with people with disability and their diverse communities. Our research projects in disability and inclusion are driven by the perspectives of people with disability. Some are co-designed with peer researchers with disability so the outcomes meet the needs of the people they are developed for.

We're constantly finding new ways to develop inclusive practices in our work and create close partnerships with disability service providers, advocacy organisations, and all levels of government.

Our disability research takes an interdisciplinary approach united in a strong commitment to inclusion and participation. We work alongside people with disability from diverse backgrounds and provide high quality research and education outcomes.

Please join us, as together we contribute to a more inclusive society for everyone, regardless of ability.

LGBTQ+ people with disability

Deakin's Rainbow Inclusion research projects partner with Inclusion Melbourne, Thorne Harbour Health, and Rainbow Rights & Advocacy, an advocacy group of LGBTQ+ people with intellectual disability, as well as individual clinicians, advocates and community-based organisations. The research uses co-designed approaches involving peer researchers, advisory group members and participants from the LGBTQ+ communities involved.

Research outcomes can be found on the Rainbow Inclusion website, including co-designed resources for LGBTQ+ people with disabilities about their rights, health, information and support and more.



'Most times when academics write papers about people with disabilities it doesn't include the people with disabilities. This project has been run with a Chief Investigator who has an intellectual disability. There should be more projects that are run like this. I felt that being involved in this project I was equally respected and not used as a token symbol just because I have an intellectual disability. Everyone respected my barriers, for example I have trouble with typing words in emails and it's easier for me to pick up the phone and call someone or send a message and ask them to call me and they were all happy to do that. I would love to do it again.'

**Cameron Bloomfield, Chief Investigator
and Rainbow Rights & Advocacy representative**



Assistive technologies

Technology plays an enormous role in helping people with disability live as independently as possible. Children and adults with communication disabilities often benefit from Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) methods, including speech generating devices. The important role that carers play in the successful integration of AAC in home, school and community settings is widely recognised, but research shows that if carers lack confidence, or support, then AAC and other assistive technology devices are likely to be abandoned. Deakin researchers are exploring the impact of a workshop-based program called 'Learning to speak their language' on Victorian carers' capacity and confidence to use AAC at home and to advocate for AAC support. The study is also exploring changes in communication between people who use AAC and their carers following the workshop program.

Other Deakin research is evaluating smart home technology to meet the complex support needs of people living with severe intellectual disability, acquired brain injury, vision limitation, physical disability and behaviour issues. Despite increases in the development of this technology, evidence is still lacking as to its value for people with disabilities and those who provide them with support. This research aims to evaluate the impact of smart home technologies on the lives of residents in metropolitan Melbourne.

'We were very impressed with Deakin University as our partner for the research study on the impacts of technology on clients living in our new smart home. The research project was led by subject matter experts who were excellent in guiding us through the requirements from start to finish. The outcome was an outstanding final report that was well presented and clearly articulated the findings. The team should be commended on finding innovative approaches to achieving the research project timelines in the midst of the COVID pandemic.'

**Nicole Jahn, Director Projects
and Technology St John of God Health Care**

If you'd like to join Deakin and our partners as we work to build a more accessible society for everyone, contact:

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Deakin Child Study Centre

The Deakin Child Study Centre (DCSC) aims to help the one in five Australian children who have a disability, developmental challenge or vulnerability to develop practical and sustainable evidence-based strategies. The Centre focuses on the early years of childhood through to adolescence and creates programs that are culturally sensitive and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

DCSC combines research, clinical expertise and technology with like-minded community and industry partners and peak bodies to create evidence-based, accessible and innovative resources. The Centre aims to provide the community with training and technological innovations connecting individuals, families and professionals to work together with a common goal: ensuring every child with a disability or developmental challenge has the best possible opportunity to reach their full developmental potential.