



Villamanta
DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGAL SERVICE

Easy Read Submissions to the

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

“Supported Independent Living (SIL): What does good look like?”: Public consultation to help inform a possible ‘commissioning’ approach for part of the SIL market

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PO Box 7328
GEELONG WEST VIC 3218

ABN 32 690988 235

📞 Information:
📞 Admin:
✉ Email:
🌐 Website:

1800 014 111
03 5260 1845
legal@villamanta.org.au
www.villamanta.org.au

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About this Document

This document is a summary of what **we** (Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service) think about the Australian Government's ideas for changing Supported Independent Living.

The Australian Government is looking at whether it should use a new way of organising some Supported Independent Living.

We are a legal and advocacy service for people with disability.

We help people with disability understand and protect their rights.

We work with people across Victoria.

This is an Easy Read version of our submissions.

We may refer to the Australian Government as **the Government** in this document.

What is Supported Independent Living?

Supported Independent Living (SIL) is support for people with disability who need help with everyday activities in their home.

This can include:

- Personal care
- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Getting ready for the day
- Being a part of the community

What Problems do People in SIL experience?

We regularly help people who live in SIL.

People sometimes report serious problems, including:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Unsafe support
- Restrictive practices
- Providers having conflicts of interest
- Difficulties making complaints
- Poor quality services

What is the Government Proposing?

The Government says a **commissioning** approach may improve:

- Quality
- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Outcomes for participants

Commissioning means the Government would play a bigger role in deciding who provides some SIL services.

What does Villamanta Think?

We are not convinced that a new commissioning system is needed/

We say the consultation paper does not clearly show:

- Why the commissioning is necessary
- Why the current systems cannot be improved
- That commissioning would provide better outcomes

We believe more evidence is needed before introducing a new system.

Why is Villamanta Concerned?

We say many of the problems in SIL are already the responsibility of the **NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission**.

These problems include:

- poor quality supports
- unsafe practices
- failures to protect rights
- restrictive practices
- poor complaint handling
- poor incident reporting
- workforce issues
- neglect

We say these issues should be dealt with before creating a new system.

Could Commissioning Create New Problems?

We say commissioning could create risks.

These risks include:

- doing the same work as existing regulators
- confusion about who is responsible
- different levels of protection for different participants
- less choice and control for participants.

We believe commissioning should not replace strong regulations.

Questions for the Government

We want the Government to explain:

- What problems will commissioning solve?
- Why have current arrangements not worked?
- What evidence shows commissioning will improve outcomes?
- How will participant choice and control be protected?
- How will confusion and duplication be avoided?

What Should Happen First?

We say the Government should first strengthen the **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**.

This could include:

- more monitoring of SIL services
- more inspections and audits
- stronger investigations
- better enforcement of rules
- continued funding for advocacy and legal services
- quality improvement programs
- more training and support for workers.

Community-led Approached

Sometimes there may be a need for targeted commissioning. For example:

- rural and regional communities
- First Nations communities
- cultural communities
- areas where there are very few providers.

If commissioning is used, we believe it should be designed with the community. Communities understand:

- local needs
- culture
- local relationships
- what good support looks like.

Working with communities can help create services that are:

- trusted
- effective
- culturally safe
- responsive to people's needs.

Key Message

We Agree there are problems in SIL.

However, we believe the Government should first improve regulation and safeguards before introducing a new commissioning system.

Any future commissioning should protect people's rights, choice, control, and safety, and be designed with the communities it affects.

Glossary

Abuse is when someone hurts you, treats you badly, or stops you from doing things you want to.

Commissioning means the Government would play a bigger role in deciding who provides some SIL services.

Conflicts of interest happen when a person has a chance to put their own personal benefit ahead of the needs of the person they support.

Restrictive practices are actions or rules that stop you from moving freely, doing what they want, or accessing certain items.

Supported Independent Living (SIL) is support for people with disability who need help with everyday activities in their home.

The **NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission** is an independent government group that makes sure people with disability who take part in the NDIS are safe and get good services

Neglect is when someone does not give you the care, support, or basic things you need to stay safe and healthy.