

# Working relationships between people with intellectual disability and support workers: What role does policy play?

Sally Robinson (presenting)

and Karen Fisher, Anne Graham, Kelley Johnson, Ed Hall, Sandra Gendera, Kate Neale, Suzanna Poredos



# Background

- The way that relationships between people with intellectual disability and their support workers are positioned in policy is a knowledge gap.
- This relationship is increasingly important in NDIS and other policy contexts.
- This policy review comprised the first phase of ARC Linkage *Relationships and Recognition* project



Australian Government  
Australian Research Council

LP150100013

# Focus of the review

- The extent to which current disability policy acknowledges, promotes or diminishes the role of relationships between people with intellectual disability and support workers
- Using Honneth's recognition theory to examine:
  - whether and how relationships between people with disabilities and their support workers are articulated in policy; and
  - to find out to what extent institutionally or normatively mediated recognition is present or absent.

# Process

- 3 stage process:
  - categorization of policies, textual analysis and content analysis.
- 4 policy levels involved:
  - international, federal, state and local (the latter linked to two case study organizations).

## Policies selected and grouped at the four levels

Policy level	Thematic grouping	Policy documents
International		UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Federal	NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme)	National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 NDIS Operational Guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Conduct – Responding to abuse, neglect, and exploitation</li> <li>Planning and Assessment - Personal Care Supports</li> <li>Planning and Assessment - Recreation Supports</li> <li>Planning and Assessment - Participants Needs</li> <li>Operational Guidelines Children</li> </ul>
	National Disability Strategy	National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
	National Standards for Disability Services	National Standards for Disability Services
	Workers’ Rights	SCHADS (Social, Community, Home Care, and Disability Services) Award NDIS Integrated Market, Sector and Workforce Strategy
State	Inclusion	Disability Inclusion Act 2014 NSW Disability Inclusion Plan NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines
	Disability Service Standards	NSW Disability Standards Act 1993 Standards in Action. Addendum to the Standards: Guide for services working with children and young people with disability
	State policy plan	Ready Together: A better future for people with disability in NSW
	State implementation guides	NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodation Service Provider Guidelines</li> <li>Community Participation Life Choices and Active Ageing Programs Guide</li> <li>Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure</li> <li>Decision Making and Consent Policy and Procedures</li> <li>Behaviour Support Policy</li> </ul>
Organization	Organization A and B case studies	Employee Induction, discipline and antidiscrimination Person-centered support Service management and service access Rights policy, participation and inclusion

## Textual analysis results by policy

	Rights	Supportive Relationship	Capacity	Choice	Participation	Respect	Risk	Safe/ty	Dignity, integrity	Interaction	Inclusion	Independent	Protect	Responsibility	Citizen	Friendship	Conflict	Autonomy	Together	Trust
<b>Policies</b>																				
<b>International</b>																				
UNCRPD	x	-	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	x	x	-
<b>Federal</b>																				
NDIS Act	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	x	x	-	-	-	-
National Disability Strategy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	-	-	x	-
National Standards	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	x	-
Workers' Rights	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>State</b>																				
Inclusion	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	-	x	-	x	x	-	x	x	-	-	-	x	-
Disability Service Standards	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	-	-	x
State Policy Plan	x	-	x	x	x	-	-	x	x	-	-	-	x	x	-	x	-	-	-	-
Implementation guides	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	x	-	x	-
<b>Organisation</b>																				
Employee Induction	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	x
Discipline, antidiscrimination	x	-	-	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
Person-centred support	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	-	x	-	-	x
Service management	x	x	x	-	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	-	-	-	-	x	-	-
Service access	-	x	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rights policy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	-	-	x	-	-	-
Participation and inclusion	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	x	-	x	x	-	-	-	x	-	-	-
Total policies with text	15	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	12	11	10	10	9	7	4	4	4	4	3

# Findings

- The policies do not usually talk about the relationship as a mutual partnership.
- Policies focus mostly on the rights of people with disability and the responsibilities of support workers:
  - International and national policies are more likely to focus on the rights & position of the person with disability and respect from workers.
  - State and organisational policies reference these international and national policy aspirations, but also tend to discuss what is or is not possible to protect against risk of harm.
- The tensions between choice and safety in policy create potential struggles for recognition – something that policy cannot solve but organisations need to manage.

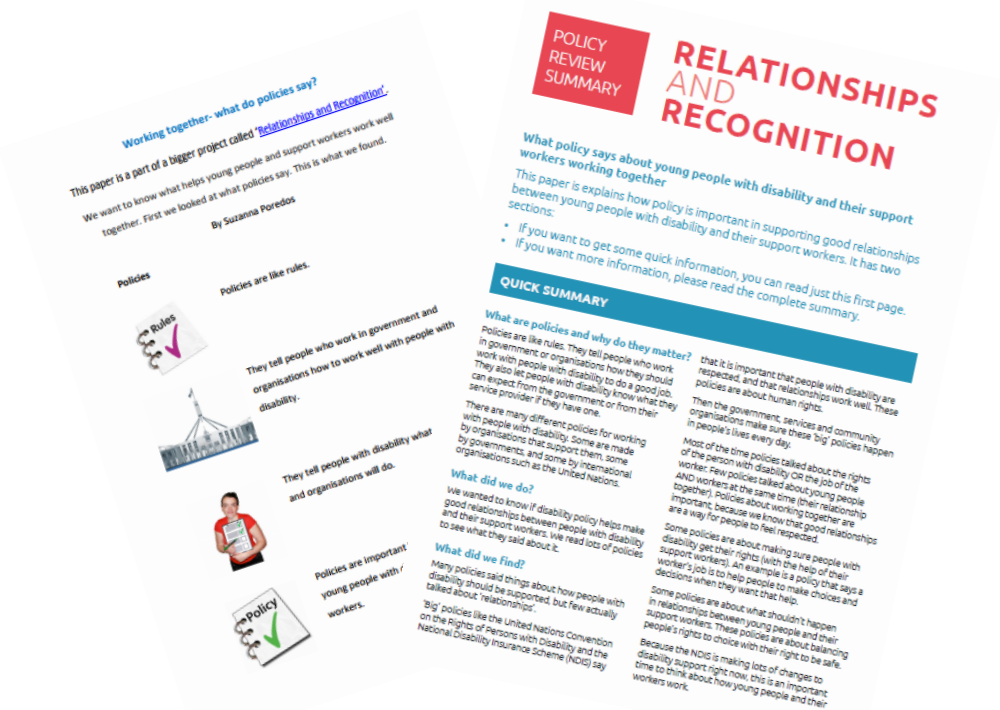
# What does this mean for our research, and others?

- The absence of policy laying the groundwork for relationships is an important gap in understanding how people with disability and workers can be cared about, valued and respected in their work together.
- While this relationship is often positioned as an opportunity for expression of rights, current policy also highlights struggles over recognition.
- A need to ensure that policy is not too complicated with lots of social and political demands but instead lays groundwork for how human rights, freedom, identity and justice can be realised together.



# What next?

- Policy paper
  - Summary
  - Plain English
  - Journal article
- Policy seminar



# Informing the rest of our project

- Phase 2 : photo research with young people with disability and their support workers to understand their working relationships together



- Phase 3: surveys with young people and support workers to confirm and extend



# For more information:

- Our project website: [www.rcypd.edu.au/projects/r/](http://www.rcypd.edu.au/projects/r/)
  - Policy review, summary, easy read material
  - Relationships and Recognition photo research book

Sally Robinson – [sally.robinson@scu.edu.au](mailto:sally.robinson@scu.edu.au); 02 6620 3134