27 November 2023

Project overview

Supporting Independent Living Cooperative (SILC) seek to demonstrate how SILC work with families and people with disability to co-design home and living solutions to best meet the person's needs.

SILC does this through the set-up of family governed cooperatives, which are operated by families of people with disability.

SILC’s model recognises that people with disability with their families, are in the best position to make decisions about where they live, who they live with, and who supports them.

The project will observe how SILC co-design the home and living solution to best meet the person's needs, and as a result, optimising outcomes in the person's social, community and living environments.

Provider story

Supporting Independent Living Cooperative’s (SILC) model was inspired by its founder Steve Anthony’s experience seeking accommodation for his son Patrick who has autism and an intellectual disability.

Steve found the choices made led to poor quality of life for his son with a lack of consistency and choice in routine and disengagement from his community.

As a result, Steve worked with government to set up a pilot family-governed accommodation model. It was a way to deliver supported independent living accommodation services that give more choice to people with high complex support needs.

This included choice over where they live, who they live with, who supports them and when, to achieve a good quality of life.

At the centre is a community approach and collaboration with families. While SILC, as the secondary cooperative, provides the back of house support and connections, families form the primary cooperative, a legal entity of its own.

The families co-design services, decide on the roster of care, and choose the staff members most suited to the person in their care.

‘That’s why we set up (our legal structure) as a cooperative’ says Angela Yee, CEO of SILC. ‘It’s about everybody coming together, co-designing and essentially cooperating to come up with the best solution for people with disability.’

The model first tries to understand the individual's needs and what their best life would look like at home. Only then does financial modelling come into the picture.

SILC's model leverages off community and natural assets available to families.

This might include private rental subsidy and other government services. This ensures the participant fully accesses all resources available.

Angela says 'Get the voices of people with lived experience of disability, put yourself in their shoes.

Governance arrangements, at the top level, need to have people who can speak about their own lived experience to help the organisation make the right decisions for the people we are serving.

'You have to be a learning organisation. It should always be about how we can do better next time and improve for the benefit of our residents.'

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