

# Impact framework

Informed by internationally recognised  
person-centred outcome approaches



# afford

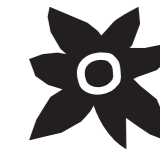
Good friends. Great adventures.



Afford respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands throughout Australia on which we live and work and their connections to land, sea and community. As we walk together towards reconciliation, we pay our respects to Elders past and present, recognising and celebrating their spiritual connection to culture and Country.

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# Part 1

## Measuring what matters

### Building a better future

In the evolving landscape of support services in Australia, there's a growing recognition of the importance of measuring positive social impact, rather than solely relying on traditional success metrics such as self reported Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). While KPIs are valuable and crucial for tracking progress, effectiveness and efficiency, they often fall short in capturing the full extent of an organisation's impact on the lives of the individuals and broader community they aim to serve.

Typically, KPIs in the disability sector might include metrics like the number of clients served or hours of support provided. However, measuring true impact delves deeper, exploring the individualised qualitative changes in the lives of those who engage with the services provided. It's about understanding how services have improved their quality of life, increased their independence, or enhanced their feelings of inclusion within the community.

Focusing solely on KPIs and outputs can sometimes lead to prioritising immediate outcomes over genuine long-term outcomes. Measuring true social impact involves looking independently at the lasting effects of how an organisation engages with its clients and delivers services. This approach encourages organisations to think strategically about creating sustainable positive changes that align with their

mission and the broader goals of inclusivity and empowerment in the disability sector.

By investing in understanding the real impact of products and services (whether this impact is positive or negative), organisations can take these invaluable insights and use them to guide decision-making and build a culture of continuous improvement throughout an organisation.

Specifically within the disability sector, this means organisations are able to truly identify what is working and what is not, allowing them to allocate resources more effectively and adapt their strategies to maximise impact.

Impact research is neither quick or simple. It involves a commitment to investing the time, resources and energy in identifying what is an organisation truly trying to



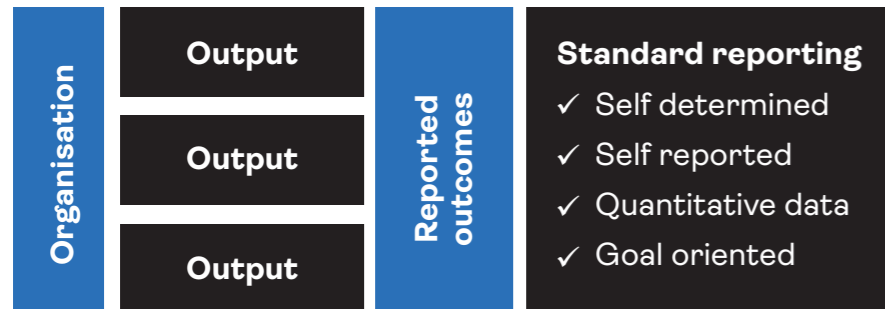
achieve, an openness to deep and impartial listening, a willingness for transparency, and ultimately a bias for acting on the feedback it receives.

Following the 2019 Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, the need for organisations within the support services sector to commit themselves to independent, ethical, transparent and useful reporting of their impact is more important than ever before.

This means prioritising and amplifying the voices of people with disabilities and ensuring that they are the ultimate deciders of what impact they want to see and whether or not it has been achieved.

This shift towards measuring true social impact represents a more holistic and meaningful approach to understanding and communicating the value created by organisations who provide services for people with disabilities and convey the essence of how this social change can ultimately benefit us all.

# Improving the standard



## Standard reporting

The most common way organisations will report on their performance is to decide what success looks like and then measure and report on the outputs undertaken to achieve these goals and whether or not they were successfully completed. This type of reporting will often focus on commercial objectives, things like measuring the number of services provided, increases in the number of clients, improvements in efficiencies, or levels of client satisfaction.



## Impact reporting

While impact reporting will often still include the types of performance indicators outlined above (i.e., number of services, increases in clients, etc.), it is significantly more focussed on the individual impact experienced by verified clients. Ultimately impact reporting aims to understand not just whether a services has been engaged with and if the client is satisfied, but have their lives been positively (or negatively) impacted as a result. Importantly, impact reporting requires engaging deeply with people and is typically done independent of the organisation to ensure its impartiality and transparency.



# Understanding our environment

In recent years, the state of disability care in Australia has been a focal point of national discussion and policy reform, particularly in the wake of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. This Commission, established in April 2019, has been key in highlighting systemic issues within the sector and ultimately in outlining a series of recommendations for broad and sweeping changes across the sector.

For decades, disability care in Australia faced challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of standardised care, and limited access to services. This led to the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2013, a significant reform aimed at providing more personalised and better-funded care for people with disabilities.

greater focus on mental health, increased employment opportunities, education and inclusion, preventing violence and abuse, accessible housing, legal and human rights protections, research and data collection, community participation and social inclusion, and stronger government accountability and oversight.

Following more than three years of investigation, the Royal Commission made several key recommendations aimed at transforming the sector, including strengthening the NDIS, enhanced safeguards and quality standards, improved training and support for care workers,

These recommendations represent a comprehensive approach to overhauling the disability care sector in Australia. They aim to address longstanding issues of abuse, neglect, and inequality, while promoting a more inclusive, supportive, and rights-based approach to disability care.

For decades, disability care in Australia faced challenges such as inadequate funding, lack of standardised care, and limited access to services.



# A growing need

The increasing need for disability services is not just about numbers; it's also about quality and diversity of services. As awareness grows, so does the understanding that disabilities are incredibly varied, requiring a range of individualised services. This diversity calls for a multidisciplinary approach to disability services, one that is flexible and responsive to the individual needs of each person. The challenge for Australia lies not only in expanding its capacity to meet the growing demand but also in ensuring that these services are equitable, accessible, and of high quality across all communities.

**\$41.9b**

The estimated total government expenditure on the NDIS in 2023-24, an increase of 14.4% on the previous year\*.

**1 in 6**

People with disability (aged 15-64) report experiencing social isolation#.

**4.4m**

The estimated number of people in Australia living with a disability#, equating to 1 in 6 Australians.

**120,000**

The estimated shortage of NDIS workers needed in Australia to provide adequate care for people with a disability^.

\* Australian Parliament House NDIS Review

# Australian Institute of Health & Welfare

^ PwC Analysis 2022



## Part 2

# Making an impact

## The road ahead

For more than 70 years, Afford has been striving to provide people with disabilities support services that enable them to live their lives with as much independence, happiness and joy as possible. Founded in post-World War II era, a time when the needs of people with disabilities were beginning to gain recognition, Afford consistently strived to be an advocate and a pioneer for positive change. From humble beginnings, the organisation has grown in response to the changing needs of the community evolving from a small group of dedicated individuals to a leading service provider for nearly 3,000 people.

While its early years may have been focused on providing critical care and support for individuals with specific ailments, year on year Afford has expanded its services to reflect the changing needs of a vast and varied community. This evolution was marked by a shift towards a more holistic approach, encompassing not just physical support but also social, educational, and vocational programs.

Afford's ability to adapt and grow with the times has been a key factor in its longevity and success. Afford's journey mirrors the broader societal changes in attitudes towards disability, moving from a model of care to one of empowerment and inclusion.

While Afford believes there is much to be proud of over its decades of service, it is united in its desire to focus all resources in building a better, brighter, and more impactful future for the community it is proud to serve.

In 2023, Afford embarked upon a unified effort to design a new strategy to steer the organisation into a new era. The focus of this new strategy is to prioritise the rights, needs and aspirations of its clients above all else and commit its resources and voice to creating positive and meaningful impact for those it aims to serve.

Afford is dedicated to understanding how it can generate the most significant positive impact for its clients, their families, and the broader community.



# Our purpose

To create an inclusive world where human rights are realised. A world where people of all abilities come together to share in life's adventure.

# Our vision

To improve the lives of people with disability by prioritising their choices, promoting their rights and exploring possibilities together.

# Our values



## Kind

We value thoughtful acts; we take time to understand the needs of people. We do the right thing, we are friendly, positive and inclusive.



## Clear

We value taking the time to make tricky things clear and simple, so they are easy to use and understand for ourselves and others. We are open, transparent and we are genuine.



## Team

We value working together to achieve goals and have fun. We celebrate our wins and learn from our mistakes. We support each other and share our individual and team strengths.



## Explore

We value trying new things, taking the path less travelled and embracing change. We explore with purpose to make sure we have a positive impact. We value progress, fresh thinking, flexibility, and resilience.



# Part 3

## Impact framework

### Impact domains

When designing an impact framework, the first step is to identify the core domains the framework is designed to measure. These domains serve as the foundation upon which the framework is built, guiding the measurement and evaluation of an organisation's impact. In defining these domains, it is critical to ensure that the areas of focus are aligned with the organisation's purpose, vision, values and most importantly, the needs of its stakeholders.

It is important to understand that in defining an organisation's impact domains, it is not stating that anything outside these areas of focus are not important or worthy of attention and resources. Beyond the impact domains there will always be a myriad of other metrics, objectives, and outputs that require monitoring and evaluation. The impact domains, however, aim to draw focus to the areas where the organisation aims to have the greatest impact at any given point in time.

In 2025, Afford refined its impact domains to strengthen its focus on person-centred outcomes and human rights. This refinement draws on internationally recognised approaches to understanding personal quality of life for people with disability, while ensuring the framework remains clearly owned by Afford and grounded in the lived experiences and priorities of its clients.

By strengthening its focus on life outcomes, Afford is ensuring that its impact measurement is centred on real changes in people's lives, not just organisational activity or client satisfaction. This approach reinforces Afford's commitment to person-centred practice and provides a strong foundation for understanding and increasing impact over time.

For the purposes of this edition of Afford's Impact Framework, the impact domains are as follows:

- My safety and rights**
- My community and inclusion**
- My relationships**
- My choices and control**
- My goals and future**
- My economic wellbeing**



These six domains replace the previous four-domain structure (human rights, individual experience, inclusivity and connection, economic wellbeing) and provide a more comprehensive and person-centred lens through which to measure Afford's impact. Economic wellbeing is retained as a cross-cutting theme within the framework, particularly relevant to clients in Afford's employment programs.

### My safety and rights

Afford believes that every person has the right to feel safe, healthy, respected, and secure in their daily life. These are the foundations of human rights.

For Afford, Safety and Rights Security means feeling physically and emotionally safe, healthy, respected and secure in everyday life. It includes having rights upheld, being treated fairly, experiencing stability and continuity, and being supported to live with dignity.

By placing safety and rights at the centre of its impact framework, Afford is committing to understanding and increasing the positive difference its support makes to clients' safety, health, stability, rights, and dignity. This goes beyond providing the fundamentals of care and support. It encompasses the right to education, employment, social participation, and access to information and technology. This broader perspective ensures that services are not just about meeting physical needs but also about

empowering individuals to lead their lives with self-determination.

Core to Afford's purpose and vision, this domain aims to shift the historical perspective of disability work as a charitable service to one of empowerment and respect for individual choices and preferences. By focusing on safety and rights, Afford aims to ensure that their clients are not just passive recipients of care but active participants in making decisions about their lives.

Afford measures impact in this domain by understanding whether clients feel safe, respected, healthy and secure, and whether support services contribute to increased confidence, stability and wellbeing.

# My community and inclusion

Afford believes that being part of your community, getting out and about, using local places, and joining in activities, is central to a good life.

For Afford, community and inclusion means being able to get out and about, use local places and services, connect with others and take part in activities that matter. It reflects a person's sense of belonging, participation and inclusion.

Measuring impact in this domain means understanding the difference its support makes to a person's ability to get out into their community, use local places and

services, meet and interact with other community members, and take part in activities and events that matter to them.

Afford measures impact in this domain by understanding whether clients are experiencing increased participation, confidence using community spaces, and stronger connections beyond formal support settings.

# My relationships

Afford knows it is very important that every person has meaningful relationships, friendships, and a sense of belonging in their life.

For Afford, relationships means having meaningful friendships, family connections and trusted people in life. It includes feeling valued, supported and connected to others.

Measuring impact in this domain means understanding the difference its support makes to a person's connections with family and friends, their ability to make and maintain friendships, the respect shown

for their personal relationships, their control over personal information, and the opportunities they have to take on valued social roles.

Afford measures impact in this domain by understanding whether clients are building and maintaining meaningful relationships and experiencing a stronger sense of belonging.





## My choices and control

Afford believes that every person should have choice and control in their life, and that being treated as a unique individual is central to living well.

For Afford, choices and control means having a say in decisions about everyday life, support, activities and future direction. It reflects independence, confidence and the ability to influence what happens in one's life.

Measuring impact in this domain means understanding the difference its support makes to a person's ability to choose where and with whom they live, to choose their daily activities and work, to choose their own services and supports, and to have those choices genuinely heard and acted upon.

This domain also encompasses the person-centred practice of treating each client as a unique individual. When services are designed and evaluated based on how well they cater to individual experiences and choices, they are more likely to be impactful, fostering a sense of empowerment among clients.

Afford measures impact in this domain by understanding whether clients feel heard, involved in decisions and supported to exercise independence.



## My goals and future

Afford wants to support every person to identify, pursue, and achieve their personal goals and aspirations for the future.

For Afford, goals and future means having opportunities to learn, grow, work towards personal goals and build independence over time. It reflects hope, progress and the ability to shape what comes next.

Measuring impact in this domain means understanding the difference its support makes to a person's ability to identify what

they want for their future, to work towards and make progress on those goals, to learn new skills, and to have a sense of purpose and direction in their life.

Afford measures impact in this domain by understanding whether clients are developing skills, accessing opportunities and making progress towards what matters to them.

## My economic wellbeing

Afford knows it is important for people to have economic security, opportunity, and independence in their lives.

Economic wellbeing is retained as a cross-cutting theme within Afford's impact framework. Economic wellbeing is not just about the ability to earn an income; it encompasses financial independence, security, and the capacity to make choices about one's own life and resources. For individuals with disabilities, achieving economic wellbeing is often fraught with challenges, including higher rates of unemployment, underemployment, and barriers to accessing education and vocational training.

By understanding the impact Afford can generate in this area, the organisation can address these challenges head-on, providing tailored support that enables individuals to overcome barriers to economic participation and success. The focus on economic wellbeing goes beyond immediate employment; it is about ensuring long-term sustainability and independence, allowing individuals to not just earn but also save, invest, and plan for the future.

This theme is particularly relevant to Afford clients participating in Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE Supported Employment), and Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) services.





My daughter loves Afford. The support works are fantastic, not only to the client but to the parent carer as well.

My daughter is 53 she loves Afford, she been to few others but hated them. Would cry not to go. Now she will cry if she can't go to Afford.

– Afford client, surveyed in 2023

## Theory of change

A theory of change is crucial when designing an impact framework as it provides a clear roadmap of how the organisation intends to achieve its desired outcomes.

Essentially, the theory of change acts as a comprehensive illustration outlining the steps by which a group of actions and outputs will lead to desired outcomes. For Afford this means articulating how their specific interventions (such as providing support services, advocacy, or training) are expected to lead to meaningful changes in the lives of people with disabilities. This clarity is vital not only for guiding the organisation's strategy and operations but also for communicating its goals and approaches to stakeholders, funders, and the community.

Moreover, a theory of change facilitates effective measurement and evaluation. By clearly defining the expected outcomes and the pathways to achieving them, it becomes easier to identify relevant indicators and metrics for assessment. A well-articulated theory of change ensures that this impact framework is not just measuring activities or outputs, but is closely aligned with the actual impact on individuals' lives.

# Afford's theory of change

## Assumptions

The underlying beliefs upon which our program is designed.

## Approach

The specific methods we employ in undertaking our work.

## Outputs

The specific activities and actions we undertake to deliver our desired impact.

## Short-term impacts

The short-term effects or changes we hope to create as a result of our outputs.

## Long-term impacts

The long-term effects or changes we hope to create as a result of our outputs.

## Our assumptions

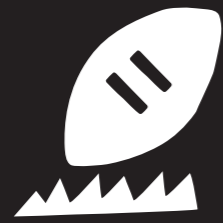
- We approach our work with the assumption that people with disabilities should feel safe, healthy, respected, and secure at all times – these are the foundations of human security.
- We approach our work with the assumption that being part of your community, getting out and about, using local places, and joining in activities, is central to a good life.
- We approach our work with the assumption that every person needs meaningful relationships, friendships, and a sense of belonging.
- We approach our work with the assumption that every person should have choice and control in their life, and that their individual aspirations, needs, and preferences should be paramount to the services and care that they receive.
- We approach our work with the assumption that every person should be supported to identify, pursue, and achieve their personal goals.

## Our approach

- We approach our work with the fundamental belief in the desire, and human right, to live a full life.
- We approach our work with the fundamental belief in the power of community and human connection.
- We approach our work with the fundamental belief that to really understand a person, the little things matter.
- We approach our work with the fundamental belief that everyone should be the author of their own story.
- We approach our work with the fundamental belief in doing things differently because as communities we can redesign what is possible.
- We approach our work with the fundamental belief in using our voice to positively promote inclusion.

## Our outputs

- We provide supported independent living and short-term accommodation services designed specifically to meet the individual aspirations, needs, and preferences of as many of our clients as possible.
- We provide disability community services designed specifically to enhance our clients' connection to and participation in their communities.
- We provide disability employment services and school leaver employment support services designed specifically to enhance the economic wellbeing and goal achievement of people with disabilities across Australia.
- Further to our direct service delivery, Afford will use its services and platform to advocate for and support people with disabilities to realise their rights throughout their lives.



### Short-term impacts

- Our clients report that Afford's support has had a positive impact on their sense of safety, health, stability, rights, and dignity in their daily life. (My safety and rights)
- Our clients report that Afford's support has had a positive impact on their ability to access, participate in, and be included in their community. (My community and inclusion)
- Our clients report that Afford's support has had a positive impact on their relationships, friendships, and sense of belonging. (My relationships)
- Our clients report that Afford's support has had a positive impact on their ability to make choices, exercise control, and be treated as a unique individual. (My choices and control)
- Our clients report that Afford's support has had a positive impact on their ability to identify, pursue, and achieve their personal goals. (My goals and future)

### Long-term impacts

- People with disability report feeling an increased sense of safety, health, stability, and that their rights and dignity are respected and prioritised at all times throughout society.
- People with disability report feeling an increased sense of belonging, participation, and inclusion in their communities.
- People with disability report feeling an increased sense of meaningful connection, friendship, and valued social roles.
- People with disability report feeling an increased sense of choice, control, and self-determination in their lives.
- People with disability report feeling an increased sense of purpose, progress, and confidence in achieving their personal goals.



# Impact indicators

Impact indicators serve as tangible metrics that allow an organisation to measure the impact of its services and interventions on the lives of the people it supports.

The importance of these indicators lies in their ability to translate the often abstract concept of ‘impact’ into concrete, measurable outcomes. By clearly defining what impact looks like, indicators help organisations to ask the right questions of clients, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate their achievements to stakeholders, funders, and the community.

When designing impact indicators, framing them as questions that measure the difference made in a person’s life is a highly effective approach. For instance, instead of a generic indicator like “number of clients who received job training,” an impact indicator asks, “What impact has the job training had on your ability to find employment?” This approach makes the indicators more person-centred and relevant, providing deeper insights into the actual changes in people’s lives.



My safety and rights	Data source
Increased sense of safety in daily life	Survey / Interview
Increased sense of being protected from harm and mistreatment	Survey / Interview
Increased sense of improved health and wellbeing	Survey / Interview
Increased sense of stability, consistency, and reliability of support	Survey / Interview
Increased ability to understand and exercise individual rights	Survey / Interview
Increased sense of being treated fairly and without discrimination	Survey / Interview
Increased sense of being treated with dignity and respect	Survey / Interview

My community and inclusion	Data source
Increased ability to access and use places in the community	Survey / Interview
Increased time spent in everyday community settings	Survey / Interview
Increased interactions with people in the community	Survey / Interview
Increased participation in community activities and events	Survey / Interview

My relationships	Data source
Increased connection to family and important people	Survey / Interview
Increased ability to make and maintain friendships	Survey / Interview
Increased respect for and support of personal relationships	Survey / Interview
Increased control over who knows personal information	Survey / Interview
Increased opportunities to take on valued social roles	Survey / Interview





My choices and control	Data source
Increased choice about where and how the person lives	Survey / Interview
Increased choice about daily activities and how time is spent	Survey / Interview
Increased involvement in decisions about own support and services	Survey / Interview
Increased independence and ability to do things for themselves	Survey / Interview
Increased confidence to try new things and have new experiences	Survey / Interview

My goals and future	Data source
Increased ability to identify personal goals and aspirations	Survey / Interview
Increased progress towards achieving personal goals	Survey / Interview
Increased ability to learn new skills	Survey / Interview
Increased sense of getting the most out of life	Survey / Interview

My economic wellbeing	Data source
Increased confidence at work	Survey / Interview
Increased sense of being valued at work	Survey / Interview
Increased work skills and capabilities	Survey / Interview
Increased confidence about economic future	Survey / Interview
Increased independence through employment	Survey / Interview
Increased social connection through work	Survey / Interview



# Impact framework summary


The following table summarises Afford’s impact framework, showing the alignment between domains, outputs, short-term impacts, and long-term impacts across internationally recognised person-centred outcome approaches.


	Outputs	Short-term impact	Long-term impact	Impact scale
<b>My safety and rights</b>	Support services that promote safety, health, rights, stability, and dignity	Clients report positive impact on their sense of safety, health, stability, rights, and dignity	People with disability feel an increased sense of human security throughout society	No impact ► Positive ► Significant positive
<b>My community and inclusion</b>	Community services that enhance connection to and participation in community life	Clients report positive impact on their ability to access, participate in, and be included in their community	People with disability feel an increased sense of belonging and inclusion in their communities	No impact ► Positive ► Significant positive
<b>My relationships</b>	Services that foster meaningful relationships, friendships, and social connection	Clients report positive impact on their relationships, friendships, and sense of belonging	People with disability feel an increased sense of meaningful connection and valued social roles	No impact ► Positive ► Significant positive
<b>My choices and control</b>	Person-centred services that respect individual choices, preferences, and autonomy	Clients report positive impact on their ability to make choices and be treated as a unique individual	People with disability feel an increased sense of choice, control, and self-determination	No impact ► Positive ► Significant positive
<b>My goals and future</b>	Support and services that help people identify, pursue, and achieve personal goals	Clients report positive impact on their ability to identify, pursue, and achieve their goals	People with disability feel an increased sense of purpose, progress, and confidence in their future	No impact ► Positive ► Significant positive
<b>My economic wellbeing</b>	Services that support people to build new skills, participate in valued roles and contribute to their financial wellbeing and independence.	Clients report positive impact on their ability to build skills, access work or meaningful activity and feel more confident, capable and hopeful about their future.	People with disability experience increased financial security, valued roles, social connection, and a sense of optimism about their future.	No impact ► Positive ► Significant positive
	<b>No impact detected</b>	<b>Positive impact detected</b>	<b>Significant positive impact detected</b>	

Data source: Qualitative and quantitative data collected through independent surveys and interviews with clients (clients and families), and data captured through internal systems and program outputs

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**Want to know more?  
Get in touch**

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