



Supporting My Rights: Project Evaluation Report

Prepared by Martina Donkers, Independent Evaluator

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About this report

This report details evaluation findings for Supporting My Rights. Supporting My Rights is a grant-funded project under *GO6984: Knowledge and Skill Development*, funded by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (the Commission) and delivered by Down Syndrome Australia (DSA). The report has been prepared by an independent evaluator, Martina Donkers, who was contracted by DSA. It has been prepared in line with the Australian Evaluation Society *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations*. The report delivers findings against DSA's Key Evaluation Questions, and provides information against the set of evaluation questions, measures and indicators identified by the Commission in the document *Program Logic: Knowledge and Skill Development GO6984 Support for NDIS Providers Grants Program Version 1.0 (October 2024)*.

About the author

Martina Donkers is an independent evaluator working across the non-profit and government sectors in Australia. She is a skilled qualitative evaluator, and is passionate about collaboration and evaluation capacity building for organisations of all sizes. Martina is particularly skilled in designing smaller-scale evaluations that meet organisational needs with limited resources, and has a reputation for strong stakeholder engagement, including trauma-informed practice. She delivers training in qualitative evaluation methods for the Australian Evaluation Society, and has been published in multiple peer-reviewed journals. Martina holds a Master of Evaluation (Hons.), and was awarded the 2024 Excellence in Evaluation Award for Emerging New Talent by the Australian Evaluation Society.

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Executive summary

High quality resources underpinned by in-depth co-design

Supporting My Rights has **successfully delivered** a set of resources that **meaningfully increase** users' knowledge of and engagement with **the rights of NDIS participants**.

- The resources are delivered as a smartphone and tablet app featuring video podcasts, interactive written materials and downloadable PDFs, and are viewed as **likable, trustworthy, and easy to understand** by target users.
- Resources are designed to be **used together** by participants with intellectual disability and providers, which increases the **usefulness** of the resources.
- The app was developed using an **exemplary co-design process** that included **hiring ten people with intellectual disability** as employees at award wages or as contractors.
- The co-design process was **instrumental** to the success of the resources, and all participants felt **included and respected** throughout the work.

This success was enabled by a range of **practices that should be continued** for future similar projects.

- Existing co-design practices at DSA supported **inclusivity and respect**, delivering **capacity-building and confidence-building** for co-design participants. This includes **engaging co-designers as casual employees**.
- Working with a **small group of co-designers** over an extended period improved the co-design process. **Regular check-ins** with co-designers supported engagement and inclusivity.
- The Commission could consider encouraging other funded organisations to **employ their co-designers**, noting that this requires sufficient funding, effective HR structures and a supportive workplace environment.
- DSA should **document the co-design process** used for Supporting My Rights, and adapt it as needed for future co-design work. This includes finalising its new co-design guidelines based on this work.
- The Commission set **clear boundaries and targets** for the project, and was **responsive** in communications.

Opportunities to extend impact

More work is needed to **improve the reach** of Supporting My Rights to maximise its achievement of the intended outcomes for NDIS participants and providers. Both the Commission and DSA have a role to play in **promoting the app to stakeholders and target users** so that the rights of NDIS participants are more effectively upheld. This could include using the app as part of induction or professional development materials.

The **timeline** for project delivery was **challenging**. The Commission could consider **extending project timeframes** for co-design with people with intellectual disability to help support accessible co-design.

Both participants and providers would like to see **additional resources** on other topics delivered in a similar format.

- DSA could consider also using a **wider consultation process** to support co-designers to identify things not experienced by anyone in their group.
- DSA could explore funding opportunities to **address new topics** in a format similar to Supporting My Rights.
- The Commission could explore opportunities to fund an **expansion of the app** through adding other topics within its remit, and make other agencies (such as the NDIA) aware of the opportunity to do the same.



About this project

Down Syndrome Australia (DSA) is the national Disability Representative Organisation for people with Down syndrome and chromosomal variations resulting in an intellectual disability. DSA is also a Disability and Carer Representative Organisation with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and has a proven track record of collaboration to help improve the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). DSA undertakes a range of work to foster an inclusive society where people with Down syndrome have full participation and equal enjoyment of all human rights.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (the Commission) is an independent Australian Government regulator responsible for registering and regulating NDIS providers. It monitors NDIS providers and their compliance with the NDIS Code of Conduct and NDIS Practice Standards, receives and responds to complaints and reportable incidents about NDIS providers, and educates and provide best practice information to NDIS providers.

DSA was funded by the Commission to deliver the Supporting My Rights project under the grant opportunity *GO6984: Knowledge and Skill Development*.

Supporting My Rights is a set of resources co-designed with people with intellectual disability, delivered as a smartphone and tablet app available on Apple and Android devices. The app aims help people with intellectual disability understand and exercise their rights when accessing NDIS supports and services, and help NDIS providers and workers understand and uphold the rights of people with disability. The app is aimed at both NDIS participants and providers, and covers four key topics:

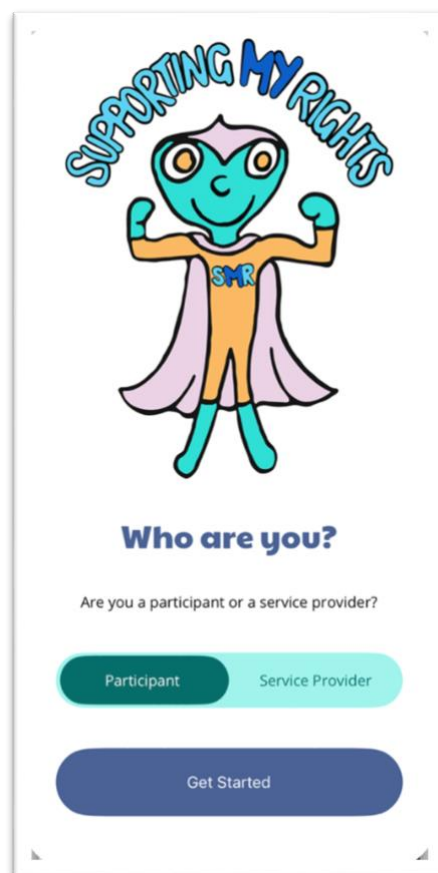
- What good service looks like
- Communicating effectively with service providers / participants
- Understanding conflicts of interest
- Giving feedback and making complaints / Managing feedback and complaints

The grant was awarded in late 2024, and work on the project was carried out throughout 2025. Project delivery was led by a Project Manager and two Project Officers with lived experience of intellectual disability. Supporting My Rights was launched in November 2025 (following a soft-launch in October 2025), and is currently being promoted to target users by DSA and its stakeholders.

DSA is required to deliver an evaluation of the project. DSA commissioned independent evaluator Martina Donkers to carry out the evaluation.

Goals for this evaluation

This evaluation was designed to deliver information that would be useful to DSA throughout the project and in considering and developing future projects, and to provide information against the questions, measures and indicators identified by the Commission in the document *Program Logic: Knowledge and Skill Development GO6984 Support for NDIS Providers Grants Program Version 1.0 (October 2024)*.



This evaluation aimed to:

- Provide information throughout the project to support the team to gauge progress and make iterative improvements
- Meet the Commission's needs for data collection and reporting against intended outcomes
- Base criteria and standards for evaluation on what is important to people in the DSA community, including people with Down syndrome and intellectual disability
- Consider the quality of both the project outputs (resources) and the process used (co-design)
- Explore both outcomes and learnings
- Consider the project in the context of DSA's broader strategic goals
- Produce useful, actionable findings for DSA.

Commission's questions and indicators

Throughout this report, information that explicitly addresses an evaluation question or indicator specified in the Commission's *Program Logic: Knowledge and Skill Development GO6984 Support for NDIS Providers Grants Program Version 1.0 (October 2024)* is provided in breakout boxes.

This information should not be read in isolation from the rest of the report, which provides more detail and nuance to explain the findings against each of the Commission's evaluation questions and indicators. It is provided in breakout boxes to support the Commission to quickly identify relevant sections of the report and high-level information for their data set.

Evaluation approach

This evaluation employed a proportionate Utilisation-Focused Evaluation approach (Patton, 2012) that identified key evaluation questions and gathered data aligned to those questions. Criteria of Merit (Davidson, 2005) were used to set standards that the project should attain, and derive evaluation questions that allow performance against those standards to be determined.

An evaluation design workshop was held in May 2025 with the Project Manager and the two Project Officers with lived experience of intellectual disability. Discussion questions included:

- What makes a good co-design?
- What will make the resources useful?
- What will make this a good project?
- What are the best ways to find out what people think of the resources?

The results of this discussion shaped the development of Criteria of Merit and Key Evaluation Questions, and supported the selection of appropriate data collection methods and indicators. Criteria of Merit were designed to capture the priorities identified in the workshop, and to align to the Commission's information needs set out in *Program Logic: Knowledge and Skill Development GO6984 Support for NDIS Providers Grants Program Version 1.0 (October 2024)*, and the DSA Strategic Framework. Data collection methods were developed to deliver a level of rigour appropriate to the risk and scale of the project within available resourcing.

Criteria of Merit

'Criteria of Merit' are the characteristics of a 'good' project, i.e. they are the criteria against which evaluators assess the merit of the project. Criteria of merit are specific to a particular project, based on its goals, methods, and what its key stakeholders deem as important.



For Supporting My Rights, the Criteria of Merit are:

1. **Co-design** – the extent to which the process to develop the resources was inclusive, respectful, and empowering; the extent to which the process supported the development of high-quality resources.
2. **Resources** – the extent to which the resources are useful and effective for the DSA community, including the extent to which they are clear, accessible, liked, and meaningfully achieve the intended knowledge/behaviour changes.
3. **Contribution** – the extent to which the resources are valued beyond the DSA community, including their usefulness to providers and sector stakeholders, and the reach of the resources.

Key Evaluation Questions

The Criteria of Merit were used to define three Key Evaluation Questions:

1. To what extent was the **co-design** process effective and appropriate?
2. To what extent are the **resources** useful and effective for the DSA community?
3. To what extent do the resources **contribute** to the broader sector?

Evaluation method

A mixed-method qualitative approach was used to gather data with a range of key stakeholders across the project. A mixture of short- and long-form surveys, interviews and focus group style discussions gave people choices about how they participated in the evaluation, and allowed data to be triangulated to support richer, more nuanced understandings.

Data collection with co-design participants

Data collection with co-designers ensured the views of co-design participants were central to determining the merit of the co-design process. It also ensured the Project Team had access to information about how the project was progressing throughout the project, helping them to understand if what they were doing was effective and enabling them to course-correct if needed. Data collection comprised:

- **Co-design check-in survey** – short simple survey to be completed after each co-design session from May-October 2025. Over eight co-design sessions, the six co-designers provided 35 survey responses, averaging four respondents per session.
- **Co-design final survey** – longer-length survey mixing closed- and open-response questions completed by all six co-designers and two Project Officers with lived experience of intellectual disability in October 2025.
- **Co-design group discussion** – focus group style discussion attended by all co-design participants and the Project Officers, facilitated by the evaluator, in December 2025.

Data collection with NDIS Participants with intellectual disability

Data collection with NDIS Participants with intellectual disability aimed to minimise burden while extending the view of resource quality beyond the co-design team to intended audience members without prior experience of the app.

- **User testing** – medium-length survey focused on app functionality and suggestions for improvements or changes, completed by 14 people (both participants and providers) in October 2025.
- **Survey** – medium-length survey focused on outcomes using mostly closed-response questions with a small number of open-response questions, completed by six people from November 2025 to February 2026.



- **Interviews** – short semi-structured interviews exploring participants’ views of the app. Interviews were carried out by Project Officers with lived experience of intellectual disability. Two people were interviewed in December 2025.

Data collection with NDIS providers and workers

Data collection with NDIS providers and workers similarly aimed to minimise burden while extending the view of resource quality beyond the co-design team to intended audience members without prior experience of the app. Questions were designed to enable comparison between participants and providers, while being tailored to the intended outcomes for each audience.

- **User testing** – medium-length survey focused on app functionality and suggestions for improvements or changes, completed by 14 people (both participants and providers) in October 2025.
- **Survey** – medium-length survey focused on outcomes using mostly closed-response questions with a small number of open-response questions, completed by 6 people from November 2025 to February 2026.
- **Interviews** – short semi-structured interviews exploring providers’ views of the app. Interviews were carried out by Project Officers with lived experience of intellectual disability. Three people were interviewed in December 2025.

Data collection with family and friends of NDIS Participants with intellectual disability

Family and friends of NDIS Participants with intellectual disability were not specifically targeted because they are not a primary intended audience for Supporting My Rights, however we recognised that some family and friends may be interested to provide feedback, and so a version of the final survey was made available.

- **Survey** – medium-length survey focused on outcomes using mostly closed-response questions with a small number of open-response questions, completed by eight people November 2025 to February 2026.

Data collection with sector stakeholders

Sector stakeholders include people who work in the disability sector but have no other role on Supporting My Rights. These people can bring significant experience about what tends to work or not work, and comment on how the project can make an impact across the disability sector.

- **Survey** – medium-length survey focused on outcomes using mostly closed-response questions with a small number of open-response questions, completed by five people from November 2025 to February 2026.
- **Interviews** – short semi-structured interviews exploring providers’ views of the app. Seven people were interviewed in December 2025.

Data collection with the Supporting My Rights team

Project team members can offer unique insights into the progress of a project, particularly regarding the success or challenges of processes. The two Project Officers with lived experience of intellectual disability are also members of the target audience for Supporting My Rights, enabling them to bring an important perspective to the evaluation.

- **Team group discussion** – focus group style discussion attended by the Project Manager and the Project Officers, facilitated by the evaluator, in February 2026.
- **Executive interview** – semi-structured interview with an executive-level DSA team member responsible for Supporting My Rights, carried out by the evaluator in December 2025.



Analysis

All data were analysed against a data synthesis matrix (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014) using a deductive protocol structured against the Criteria of Merit. This enabled triangulation across disparate data sources to form a view of the project as a whole, helping to mitigate bias in data sources. Findings were synthesised to develop answers to the Key Evaluation Questions, with information also gathered against the Commission's questions and indicator set.

Limitations

Data collection was as extensive as possible within the budget, however the number of survey respondents and interview subjects who were members of the target audiences for the app was limited. A higher number of respondents would increase confidence in the findings, but this was not achievable within available resources. Two additional participants were scheduled to be interviewed but withdrew – this may be due to the overwhelming number of commitments in the December period, or feeling over-consulted, or may be because they did not want to make comments on the app.

Optional participation in evaluation activities without remuneration leads to self-selection bias, with only those particularly keen for someone to hear their perspective participating. This is theorised to lead to positive bias in the results, with people who hold somewhat negative perspectives tending to keep their views to themselves.

Self-report data measures a respondent's perception about any changes they have experienced, but does not actually measure whether anything has changed. For this project, we have relied on respondents to identify whether their knowledge and confidence has improved. It is possible that respondents experienced changes that they did not self-report, or that they reported experiencing changes but did not actually have any change. For this project, it was not appropriate to fully assess a person's changed knowledge pre- and post-engagement with the resources, and so self-report data was used.

The timing of data collection relative to the launch of the resources and timeframe for delivery of the report means that only initial impressions from target audience members could be captured. Some respondents have speculated about the sustainability of impact, but this could not be determined within the required timeframe.

The findings from the available data are strongly consistent across respondents and data sources, giving a high degree of confidence in the validity of the findings. However, the views in this report should be understood as representative of the range of views that may exist in the community, and may not be fully comprehensive.

Ethics

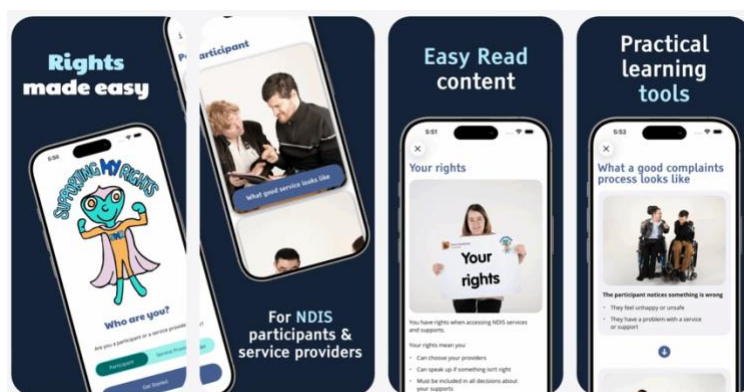
The evaluation was carried out in line with the Australian Evaluation Society's [Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations](#). All evaluation participants were provided with a Participant Information Statement in plain English and in an Easy Read format that clearly explained the purpose of the evaluation and how the data they provided is used. The Participant Information Statement advised all participants that they could have help to participate from a support person if they chose. Interviews with co-design participants and target audience members were designed using trauma-informed approaches, understanding that many people have poor prior experiences of their rights being upheld through complaint mechanisms. Quotes that appear in this report are paraphrased to help preserve participant anonymity. No names are used. Where true anonymity was not possible (such as for people who are easily identified by their particular role on the project), participants were advised as such before data collection, and given the option to make comments 'off the record'. Generative AI was not used for any part of this evaluation project.



About Supporting My Rights

Supporting My Rights aimed to deliver a set of co-designed resources for NDIS Participants with Down syndrome and intellectual disability and their service providers and workers. The resources aimed to:

- Help participants and providers better understand participants' rights when accessing NDIS services
- Help participants and providers feel confident to uphold participants' rights
- Help participants feel confident to provide feedback, and make complaints to service providers
- Help providers feel confident to receive feedback and manage complaints appropriately
- Help providers implement better practices in communication, conflict of interest, feedback and complaints management so that they can more effectively uphold participants' rights.



The set of resources were co-designed and co-produced by a team of six Project Reference Group Members with lived experience of intellectual disability, two Project Officers with lived experience of intellectual disability, and a Project Manager. The Project Reference Group members were located around Australia.

The Project Manager and Project Officers ran eight online (videocall) co-design sessions with the Project Reference Group from May to October 2025. Some sessions required pre-work, such as completing a survey to identify content. A co-production session was held in-person in Melbourne, which required some Project Reference Group members to travel interstate. At this session, Project Reference Group members recorded video podcasts and participated in a photoshoot as part of resource co-production.

The resources were delivered as the Supporting My Rights app, available to download from the Apple and Android app stores. The app was launched in November 2025.

Commission's questions and indicators

What output/s were produced?

- The project delivered the Supporting My Rights app.

and type of new resource outputs

- The Supporting My Rights app comprises:
 - 8 modules with interactive written material and examples
 - 5 video podcast episodes (including captions and Auslan translations)
 - 6 quizzes, checklists and reflection exercises
 - 6 PDF downloads including templates and summaries.

How were the outputs implemented?

- The resources have been bundled together as a smartphone app.
- The app-based delivery has supported target audience members to engage with the set of resources as a cohesive package in an accessible and readily available format.
- Some participants have described being able to revisit the app at times when they needed support to uphold their rights.



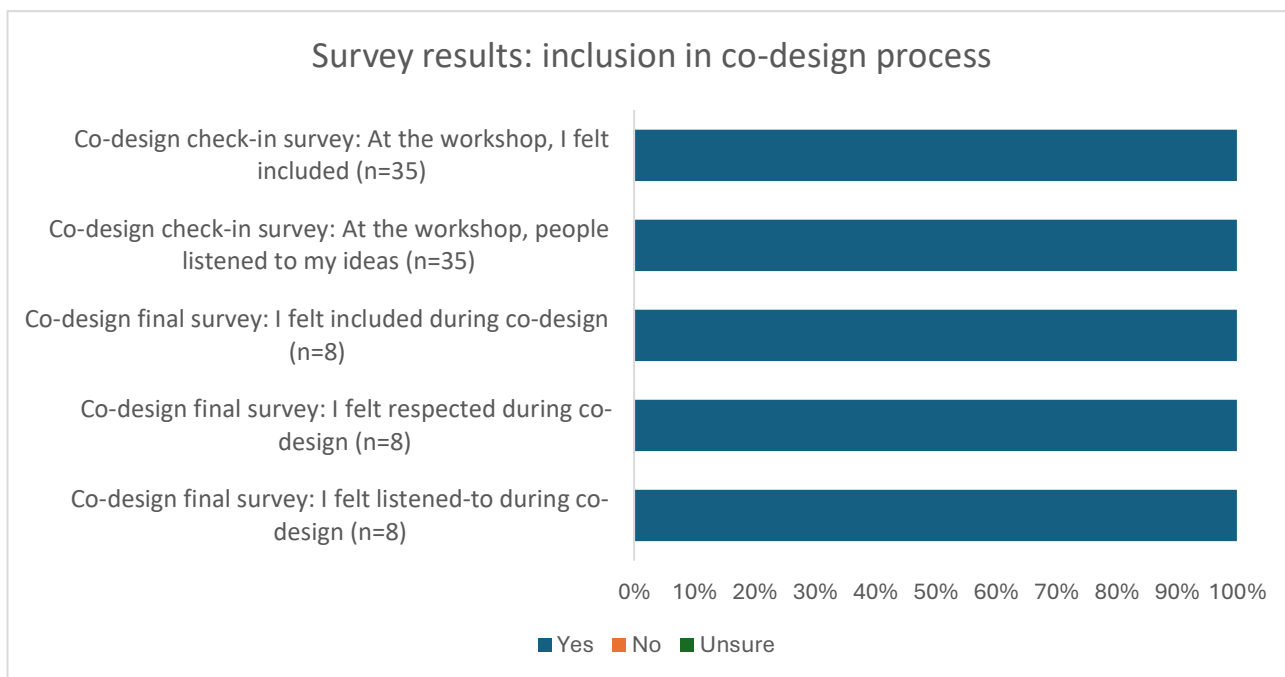
KEQ 1: To what extent was the co-design process effective and appropriate?

Criteria of merit: **Co-design** – the extent to which the process to develop the resources was inclusive, respectful, and empowering; the extent to which the process supported the development of high-quality resources.

- **The co-design process was very effective and very appropriate.**
- **The process was well-designed and well-implemented to achieve the intended outputs.**
- **Co-designers experienced the process as deeply inclusive and respectful, and described finding the project enjoyable and personally rewarding.**
- **Co-design was fundamental to decision-making on every aspect of the project, and was fundamental in delivering high-quality resources.**
- **The timeframe for the project was short given the depth of co-design and the process would have benefited from a longer timeframe.**

An inclusive, respectful and empowering project

Every member of the Project Reference Group and the Project Officers described feeling included, respected and listened to throughout the project. Co-designers were asked to complete a check-in survey after each session, and a longer survey at the end of the project, and on every occasion, every respondent agreed that they felt included.



This was substantiated by comments provided in the check-in surveys, such as:

It feels good to be here – co-design participant

I really enjoyed listening to everyone’s ideas – co-design participant

The final survey included similarly positive comments, such as:

I always felt I had a say. – co-design participant



I was being valued by in the project – co-design participant

A lot of respect of being listened to and heard. – co-design participant

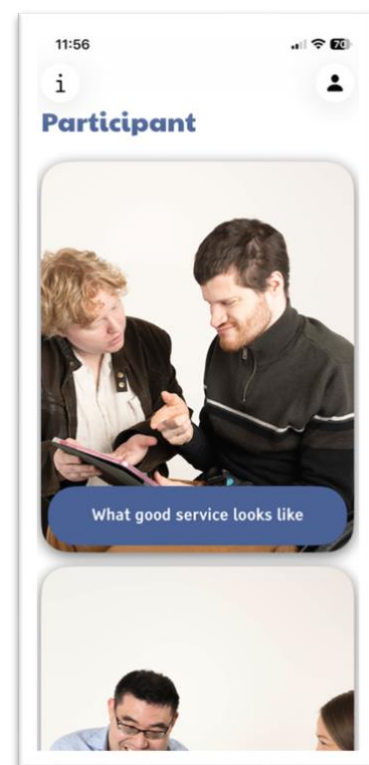
At the co-design focus group discussion, co-designers elaborated on the ways the project made them feel included, and the impact that had on them personally. They described feeling welcome and valued for their ideas. Many highlighted how much they appreciated meeting new people through their work on the project.

Co-designers strongly valued the collaborative nature of their work, and the feeling of being part of a team working towards a shared goal. They described occasional differences of opinion, and collaborative discussion to resolve these and come to a shared decision.

Everyone spoke up and had their say, that made it come together well. Everyone did their bit. Everyone cooperated, whether it was doing the app, or the podcast or the photo shoot. That made it work really well. Everyone was always enthusiastic – which was fantastic. That made everyone feel motivated to achieve the same goal and create this app. – co-design participant

The DSA executive team member noted that co-designers have experienced significant capacity building as a result of their work.

The capacity building for the team, the journey they have been on personally – it's been a real joy to watch. I spoke with [two co-design team members'] parents recently, and it was lovely to see the impact the project has had. – DSA executive team member



Recommendation: DSA and the Commission should continue to recognise the value of co-design for its capacity-building and confidence-building among co-design participants.

Recommendation: DSA should maintain current practices that support inclusivity and respect for co-design participants.

Appropriate and effective co-design method

The co-design method was developed by the Project Manager based on discussions with other DSA staff members, desktop research on best practice, and prior experience. The co-design method was discussed with the Project Officers and the Project Reference Group, who provided sign-off that they were happy with the approach. The Project Manager demonstrated a clear understanding of the grant goals, and helped ensure that each co-design session was focused on the planned outputs and outcomes.

[Project Manager] has done a great job of keeping boundaries in place, and keeping people on task while allowing creativity and idea sharing. It's clear that the boundaries were well established. – DSA Executive Team Member

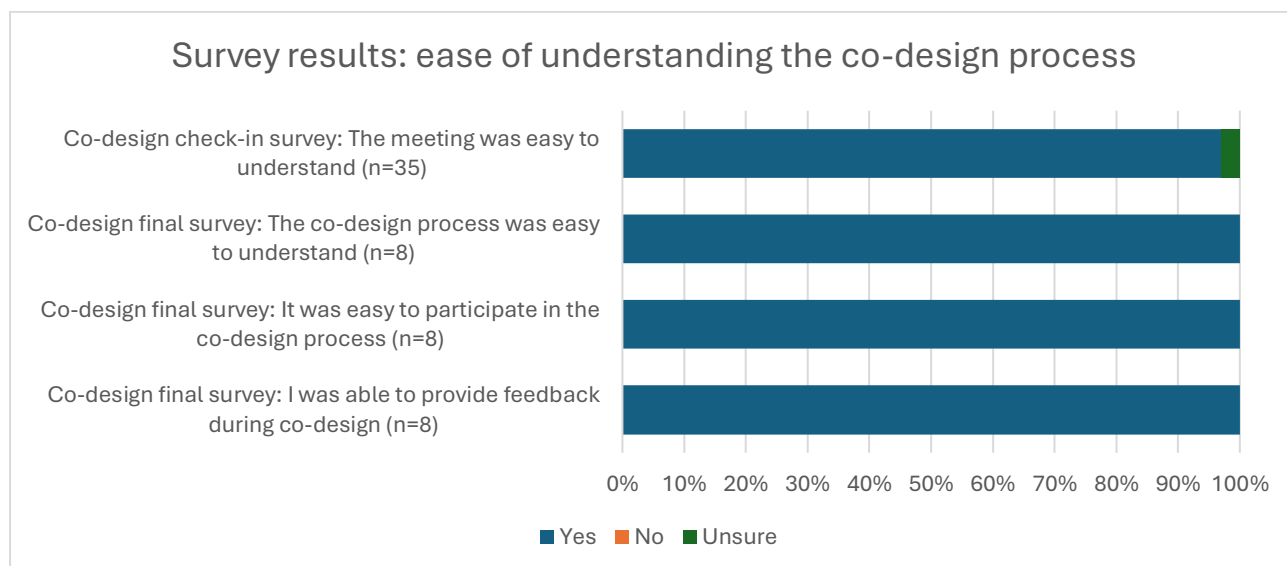
[Project Manager] kept us on track! – co-design participant

The process engaged the same group of co-designers (the Project Reference Group) throughout the project, and involved them in co-production as well as co-design. The co-design group noted that this consistency supported development of a shared purpose, and also helped make participation easier.



It was good having the same group through the whole project, not changing the group. Because for me, change is hard. – co-design participant

Importantly, the co-designers found the process easy to engage with. At the final survey, every co-designer said the process was easy to understand and participate in. Early in the project, one co-designer selected that they were ‘unsure’ if the meeting was easy to understand, but all other responses throughout the project selected ‘yes’. This suggests that the project team was able to add additional clarity to the following sessions, ensuring everyone found the process easy to understand.



In the final survey, co-designers explained:

[Project Manager] explained everything very well to us and made us feel comfortable. – co-design participant

Everything went well and was discussed in Simple Easy Read language. – co-design participant

Co-designers also noted that the check-in surveys that formed part of the evaluation helped ensure their participation.

I was able to provide feedback during the Co-design and [Project Manager] would follow up a feedback survey – co-design participant

I like this new survey with the big icons that you so much – co-design participant

Recommendation: DSA and the Commission should recognise the value of co-design processes that engage the same small group of co-designers over a longer period to improve participant experience.

Recommendation: Regular check-ins with co-designers should be continued on future projects to support strong engagement and inclusivity.

Commission’s questions and indicators

Were people with disability included in the project? And how?

- Eight people with intellectual disability were employed at award wages to deliver the project – two as Project Officers and six as Project Reference Group members (co-designers).
- The team co-designed and co-produced the resources.
- A young artist with Down syndrome was contracted to design the logo with the Project Reference Group.
- A graphic designer with intellectual disability was contracted to design the colour scheme, downloadable templates and PDF resources.



Were families and carer included in the project? And how?

- Families and carers were not specifically included in the project. Families and carers of the co-designers and project officers played an important role in supporting their participation, for example by helping them attend work.

Were providers and workers included in the project? And how?

- Providers and workers were invited to an online discussion early in the co-design process. Two attended.
- Providers and workers participated in user-testing of the app prior to launch.

Strong engagement from co-designers

Co-designers demonstrated strong engagement and pride in the project. They identified several practices that enabled this, including establishing strong group norms, and respect for each other's communication styles.

We always went through the group rules and everybody showed respect to each other. – co-design participant

We respected each other's opinions and gave everyone encouragement. – co-design participant

Co-designers highlighted the importance of meeting different communication needs, both in the co-design process and for the Supporting My Rights resources. Some of the co-designers have experience of other disabilities in addition to intellectual disability, and the group emphasised the importance of ensuring everyone's participation in the process, and of meeting a range of communication needs in the final resources. The Supporting My Rights app includes Auslan and captioning for all video content, can be used with a screen reader, and is WCAG AAA compliant for colour contrasting.

Having the group to guide what will be helpful, like screen readers – that's very important to not only people who need it for our group, but maybe other people who use the app might also need it. So it's really important for everyone. – co-design participant

The in-person co-production session where co-designers recorded the video podcasts and participated in a photoshoot was a major highlight for all co-designers. They described delight at getting to meet each other in-person. One co-designer also explained that the trip helped them better manage their travel anxiety. The experience of having their photographs, videos and voices form the major part of the app seems to have significantly contributed to the co-designers feelings of being included and respected.

I really enjoyed meeting everyone in person. I really enjoyed doing the photoshoot and podcast, and going on that trip. – co-design participant

I was super excited to be part of this project, especially the photoshoot and the podcast, and seeing the app launched I feel very proud. – co-design participant

This also helped the co-designers strengthen their social connections with each other, and they described offering peer support to each other during times of hardship.

Outside work hours, people who were in the co-design process would message in facebook and say how included they felt. They enjoyed that they had a say and were able to contribute. – Project Officer

Being employees

The co-designers were all engaged as casual employees of DSA at award wages. This is a different arrangement than many co-design processes, which often compensate participants with a gift card or similar, but retain an arm's length



relationship. As DSA employees, the Supporting My Rights co-designers had regular shifts, regular payment, superannuation, and an identity as an employee of a workplace.

The Project Manager explained that this changed expectations around engagement on both sides. There was an expectation of commitment to the project, in line with the expectations of other employees, and co-designers similarly expected the respect that is afforded to employees doing meaningful work that contributes to their community.

Co-designers took their role as employees seriously, and many expressed a positive view of themselves as employees.

We're not just staff, we're workers as well. – co-design participant

This understanding of themselves as employees seems to have supported co-designers to push through more challenging parts of the project. For example, co-designers explained that the work could be tiring, especially when there was a tight deadline to meet, but that was just part of being a worker.

You do get tired, the screen time, you get tired. It's not easy sometimes, advocating for other people. You have to put other people's needs first. – co-design participant

I think being tired like that, it's just work. And I'm doing something good for the community. – co-design participant

DSA's workplace practices were an important enabler for the co-designers to work as employees. The DSA executive team member explained some of the practices that have been implemented.

We have been on a journey to improve inclusive practices as a whole. We learn and improve, and the base level of willingness is important. We now have 40 employees with Down syndrome or intellectual disability, so that has meant more inclusive HR practices, new approaches to meetings, and more. Other organisations might say it's costing too much or taking too much time, but that's not us. We're lucky to have a team that's so committed. – DSA executive team member

Recommendation: Practices such as setting group norms and supporting a variety of communications needs should be continued for co-design projects.

Recommendation: DSA should continue to use employment arrangements for co-design projects. The Commission could consider encouraging other funded organisations to employ their co-designers, noting that this requires effective HR structures and a supportive workplace environment.

Commission's questions and indicators

people with disability included in the project

- In total, ten people with intellectual disability were employed or contracted to deliver the project.
- People with disability also participated in user testing and evaluation.

and type of approaches used to engage people with disability, providers and workers, and families and carers

- Project Officers supported the delivery of the project, with close supervision from the Project Manager.
- Co-designers participated in regular online meetings to co-design and co-produce the resources.
- The whole team attended an in-person co-production session to record video podcasts and do a photoshoot to create images for the resources.
- Some contractors with Down syndrome or intellectual disability were engaged to deliver aspects of the project, including graphic design.
- Providers and workers engaged in an online discussion.
- Participants, providers and workers tested the app and completed a survey to deliver their feedback as part of the user testing phase.
- Participants, families, carers, providers and workers participated in the evaluation to provide feedback on the app and suggestions for improvement.



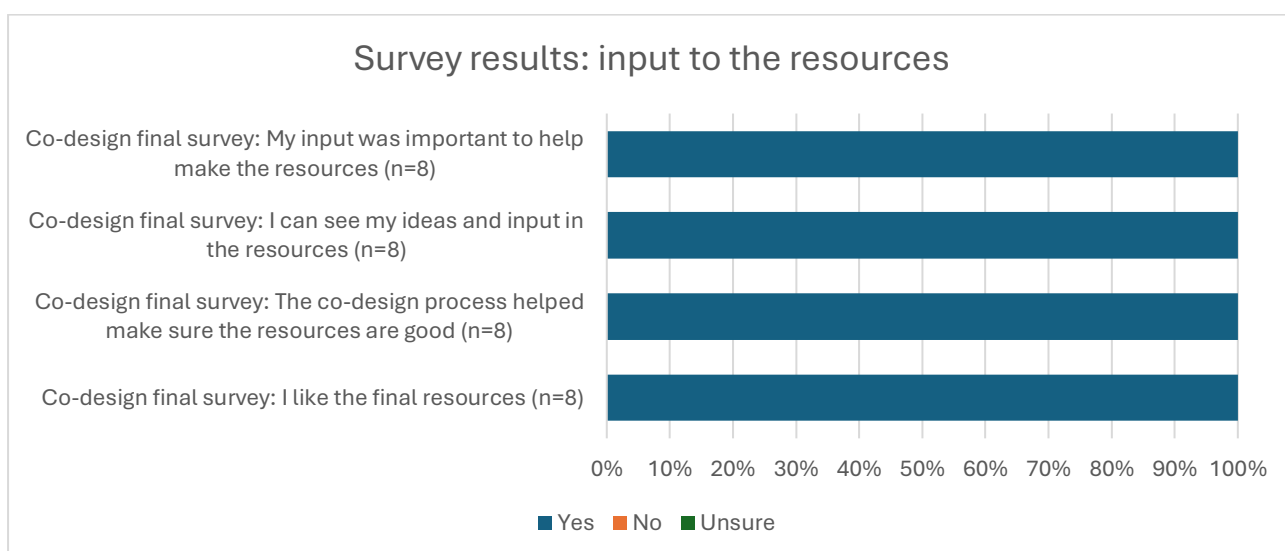
Co-design deeply integrated throughout the project

The co-design process was fundamental to Supporting My Rights. Co-designers strongly believe that their input was essential, and they can clearly see their contributions in the final resources.

Co-designers, project team members, and the DSA executive team member all made it clear that the Supporting My Rights co-design was deep, with co-designers making fundamental choices about how information would be delivered. Importantly, the notion of delivering Supporting My Rights as an app was not part of the original grant application and was not proposed by DSA managers – it emerged as part of the co-design process.

At the beginning, [Project Manager] asked us if we had ideas for the project. I said what about an app? And the others agreed on an app. So we went from there, it grew from there. Now we have made it. In 10 weeks, in that short amount of time. And we can see and share that with the wider community. – co-design participant

In the survey, every co-designer said their input was important for the resources.



Survey comments included:

Our resources are easy to understand and not too long or overwhelming. – co-design participant

I can see my idea's being mentioned on it for as an example like who will go to get help – co-design participant

At the co-design focus group, co-designers demonstrated pride in what they helped create, and saw their work as fundamental. Being featured in the podcasts and photos was clearly a highlight, with co-designers seeing their own faces and voices as part of the resources.

Having a real app with real people in the app was a great idea. Not cartoons. Real people. – co-design participant

We chose the logo. Some organisations want their own logo, but we got to choose our own logo for the whole project. – co-design participant

Stakeholders also noted the importance of the co-design in delivering a high level of authenticity and trustworthiness in the resources, making them more useful for participants.

I really loved the examples and the way that the examples were given from the voice of people who were involved in the project. I loved that the examples were, yeah, like they were being said how they would be said in that in that moment. – sector stakeholder



The DSA executive team member noted that the level of co-design in Supporting My Rights is extensive, with even small decisions made by the co-designers. This reflected the Project Manager's deep commitment to the process, and the extent to which the co-design team were engaged and contributing.

When you talk to the team about elements of the project, you realise the thought that has gone into the tiny details. They used a graphic designer with intellectual disability. The lighting in the podcast aligns to logo. The theme music was developed from the co-design. For all those little details, [Project Manager] could have just made a call, or the podcast studio could have just used what was on hand. But they didn't. Those little details are just so well thought out and co-designed. They are easy ones to miss but the level of thought and care is extraordinary. All those little choices didn't have to be co-design, and would have been easier if they weren't, but everything has been co-designed. – DSA executive team member

Co-designers strongly believe Supporting My Rights will be effective for members of the disability community. They want to make sure there is strong awareness about the availability of the app.

If people start using the app, they will realise, oh, I do have rights, I do have a voice – co-design participant

I really hope people use these resources because I think they will be helpful and make life easier for people. – co-design participant

Meeting project timelines

The project team explained that meeting the Commission's timeframes for the project was a challenge, and that additional time would have increased project accessibility for co-designers. The required level of output within a short timeframe was very high for a group of people with intellectual disability. DSA was granted a 6-week extension on the resource launch date, and while this was helpful, the timeframe remained challenging.

Co-designers explained some of the challenges in meeting the project timeframe. At times, co-design sessions were held weekly, and co-designers needed to do additional prep or follow-up work between sessions to progress the project. For some co-designers, this meant challenges coordinating the limited availability of their support worker with the co-designer's work hours and the deadlines that were set, and fitting work as well as other support needs into the support worker's hours.

Like, I needed support from Annie and sometimes Annie wouldn't be working, so I would work with Annie on a Friday or a Monday or something, and if something was due on a Wednesday or something, there's just not enough time. Annie just has a few hours with me. – co-design participant*

**Name has been changed.*

At the same time, co-designers recognised the timeframe pressure on the project overall, with deadlines set by the Commission and significant amounts of work needed to achieve the project's goals. They appreciated the clear communication about deadlines from the Project Manager, and said that time was managed well throughout the project.

Recommendation: The Commission could consider extending project timeframes for co-design with people with intellectual disability to help support accessible co-design.



Supportive organisational processes

DSA's organisational processes and commitment to inclusivity were important project enablers.

Both the Project Manager and the DSA executive team member agreed that the project governance and level of oversight was appropriate, with everyone appropriately informed at weekly and monthly intervals. The project management approach gave enough structure to support the co-design process. The Project Manager found the level of engagement from the Commission helpful, with appropriate oversight and direction.

The funder provided great oversight and direction, I thought they were brilliant as far as they go. They gave clear defined boundaries and targets. The progress reporting was not too onerous. – Project Manager

Recruitment was an important part of the project's success. The DSA executive team member explained that getting the right mix of people for the project was essential, requiring people who could work together effectively and who were passionate and interested in the project. Recruiting people with intellectual disability was laborious, and early on the team was not adequately resourced for this part of the work. The team said this process has since been refined and improved.

The Project Manager was responsible for leading the team of two Project Officers with intellectual disability, and six co-designers with intellectual disability in a way that was inclusive and accessible. This required coordinating activities with both the employees (Project Officers and co-designers) and with the employees' support networks, including support workers, families and carers, to ensure that the whole team could be available and supported to deliver outputs to deadlines. At times this was challenging, and the Project Manager identified 'teething problems', which were largely overcome with support from the organisation.

I tried to make it as inclusive as possible, even from recruitment, application inclusive and accessible, different formats. – Project Manager



A key enabler of this project has been the skill and capability of the Project Manager. Co-designers emphasised the value of the Project Manager's leadership, and the DSA executive team member highlighted the importance of the skillset.

[Project Manager] has an incredible amount of skills that she brought. Her ability to structure how the project would be delivered, enable the time and space to work on the project and engage with the codesign team, it was a really key part of the success of the project. – DSA executive team member

While DSA has experience of co-design, the Project Manager (who was new to DSA) found that there was limited existing documented processes for co-design. The Project Manager ultimately wrote their own co-design framework, because no existing DSA framework was suitable. Having such processes better documented may support future DSA projects, and there is evidence that DSA is progressing this.

The codesign process that [Project Manager] led was the best I've ever seen. It was incredibly well thought out, really structured, very meaningful and authentic, not tokenistic, and off the back of this [Project Manager] has been developing codesign guidelines for DSA. This project has set the bar. – DSA executive team member

The project team identified the iterative data collection and user testing as a project enabler, giving them a good sense of whether the project was on track,

and what needed changing as the app was developed. At the end of the project, all three project team members (Project Officers and Project Manager) carried out evaluation interviews under the guidance of the external evaluator. The team reflected that these more nuanced conversations gathered richer feedback than the surveys used during user testing, and suggested that they could consider using interviews to gather feedback earlier in the process on future projects.

Recommendation: DSA should document the co-design process used for Supporting My Rights, and adapt it as needed for future co-design work.

Recommendation: DSA should finalise the development of the new co-design guidelines based on the framework developed for Supporting My Rights.

Recommendation: DSA could consider using semi-structured interviews as part of the user-testing process on future projects.

Recommendation: The Commission should continue to clearly define boundaries and targets for grant projects.



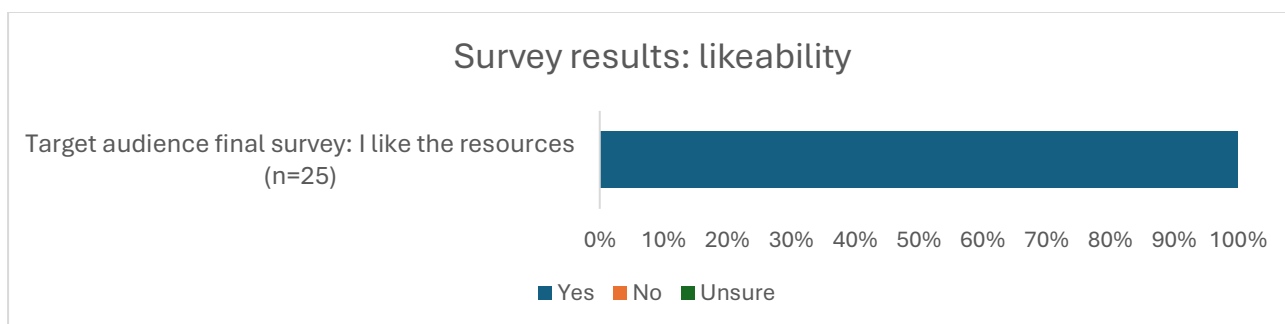
KEQ 2: To what extent are the resources useful and effective for the DSA community?

Criteria of merit: **Resources** – the extent to which the resources are useful and effective for the DSA community, including the extent to which they are clear, accessible, liked, and meaningfully achieve the intended knowledge/behaviour changes.

- **Supporting My Rights is likely to be useful and effective for the DSA community.**
- **Target audience members find the app clear, accessible, trustworthy and likeable.**
- **Supporting My Rights helps participants and providers better understand participants' rights.**
- **Some providers have identified an intent to improve practices after using the app.**
- **Some people have identified content gaps and a desire for more information within the app.**

Supporting My Rights is well-liked by the DSA community

Every survey respondent at every stage of the evaluation indicated that they like the Supporting My Rights app. This included participants, service providers and workers, family members and friends, user testers, and sector stakeholders.



This was well-substantiated in the survey comments.

I think the resources are easy to understand and will help a lot of people. – NDIS participant

Presented really well and easy to navigate between sections. The videos work as a great way to present some of the concepts. – NDIS provider or worker

The app is genuinely great. – app user testing respondent

App users identified a range of attributes that contributed to the app's likeability, including its authenticity, accessibility, the quality of the information delivered, and the feeling of empowerment and support that the app gave them. They highlighted the practical nature of the information with real examples and step-by-step instructions, as well as the simple interface.

Everything in the app is very useful, they're like a collective effort to give you comfort while using the app. – app user testing respondent

The app makes me feel more independent because I can check things myself. – app user testing respondent

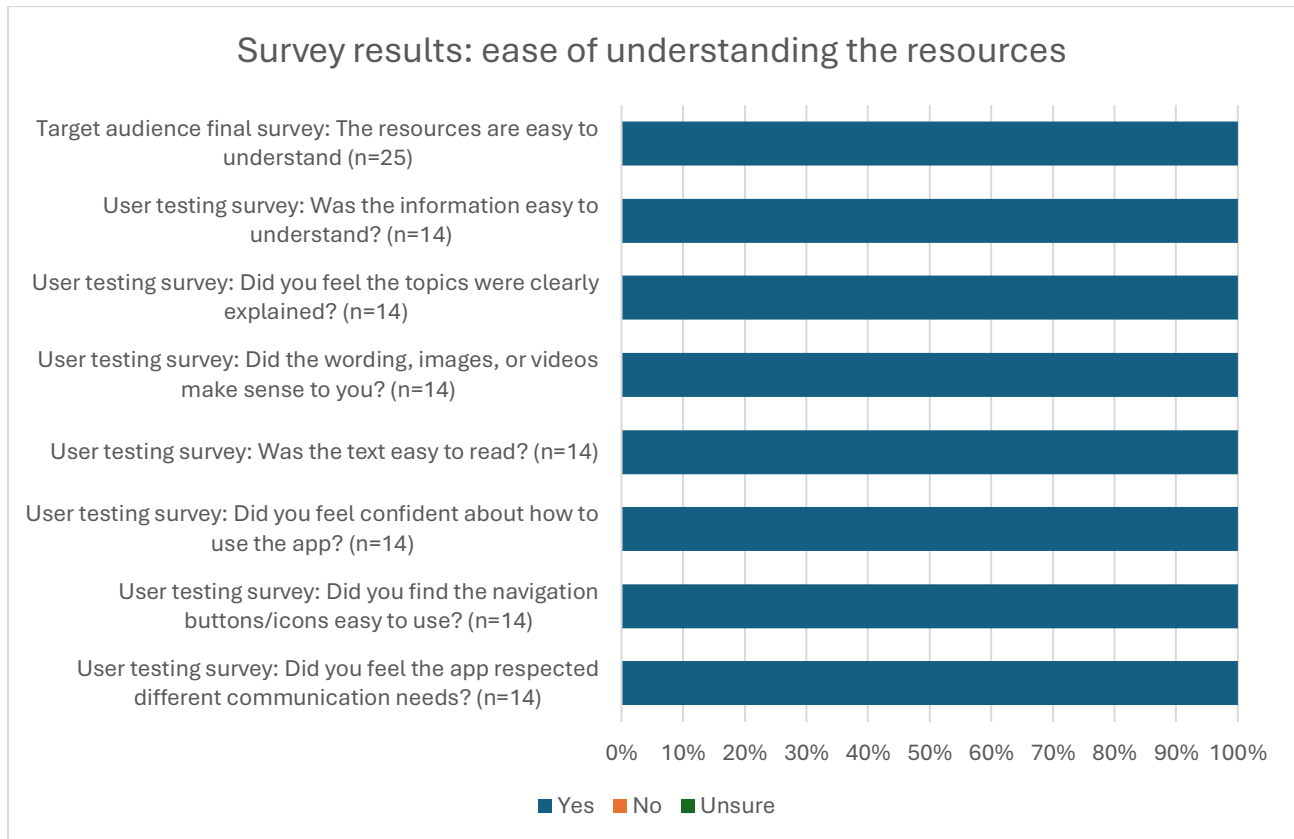
The use of an app to deliver the resources was viewed very positively by respondents, who valued that the information would be readily accessible on their phone as needed.



I love the app, especially the downloadable templates function such as the Easy Right rights poster that can be shared straight from my phone which would be handy in a situation where I was having an impromptu conversation with someone and wanted to quickly share a great resource. – sector stakeholder

Easy to understand

Every survey respondent throughout the project agreed that Supporting My Rights is easy to understand.



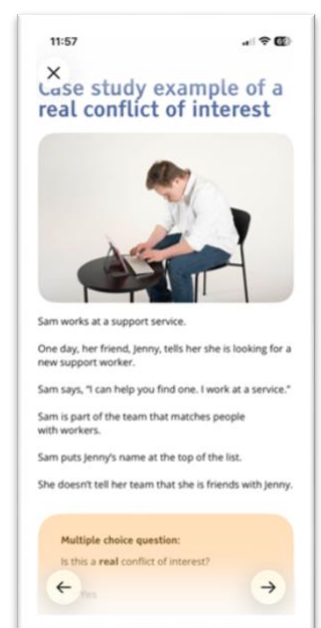
The multi-format nature of the resources within the app was noted as a key positive feature, with the video podcasts a clear highlight. Participants all said they found the app accessible and very easy to understand. Providers also noted that the use of interactive elements such as quizzes helped them take in information. Users flagged a number of accessibility features as positive aspects of the app, including the use of simple language, Auslan translations, captioning, text-to-speech functionality, screen-reader functionality, adjustable font size, simple navigation, and the use of images.

The pictures and visuals make it easier for me to follow along – app user testing respondent

The information about rights is easier to digest in the app than on the NDIS website. – NDIS provider or worker

Nice that the topics were divided so well. – sector stakeholder

Respondents explained that the video podcasts and photos made it obvious that the resources were developed with significant input from people with intellectual disability, and this was valued particularly by providers.



I like that the app was codesigned by people with lived experience of disability. – NDIS provider or worker

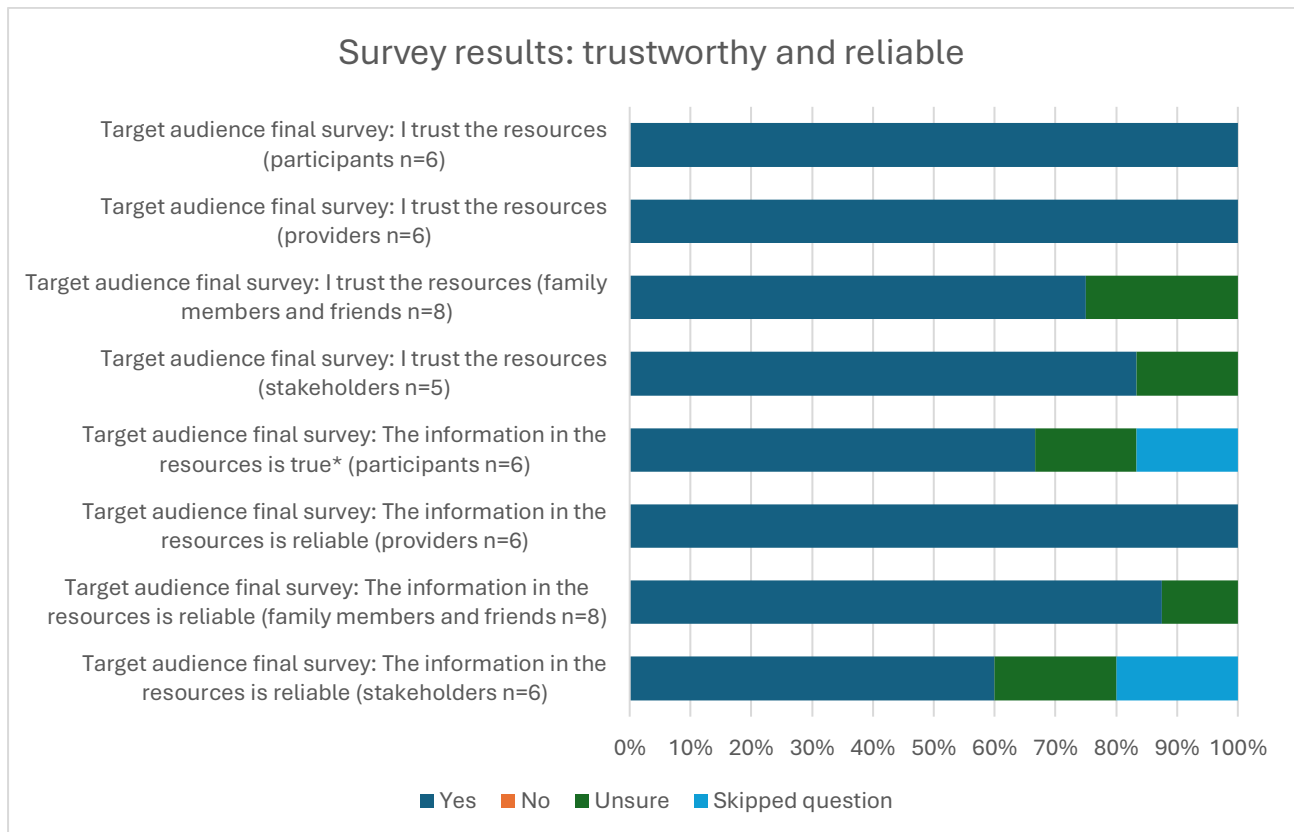
It looks great with real photos not cartoons – NDIS participant

Most people appreciated the use of an app to make the resources accessible as a package to intended users. One stakeholder noted that this leaves a gap for people who are not tech-savvy, or who cannot read.

Trustworthy and reliable

The trustworthiness of resources that promote behaviour change is important, because if the information is not perceived as reliable, users are unlikely to implement any recommendations.

Most Supporting My Rights users find the app trustworthy and reliable, citing its obvious authenticity featuring the images and voices of people with intellectual disability, and the credibility of DSA as the developer. In the survey, all participants and providers agreed that they trust the resources, however a small number of family and friends and stakeholders selected 'unsure'. Similarly, while all providers responded that the information in the app is reliable, a small number of family and friends and stakeholders selected 'unsure'. It may be that these secondary audiences feel less able to make this judgement than the primary audiences (participants and providers).



*The word 'true' was used for participants rather than the word 'reliable' (which was used for all other respondents) to help ensure the survey was easy to understand for participants with intellectual disability. This may have unintentionally made some respondents feel like they needed to verify the information without any tools to do so. The participant who responded 'unsure' made a very reasonable comment:

Most of the resources are true but some resources didn't know if need following up if accurate information. – NDIS participant



One stakeholder responded that the lack of DSA logo throughout the app reduced its trustworthiness, however another stakeholder reported that knowing DSA produced the resources increased trustworthiness. Multiple respondents noted that the way the app features people with lived experience of disability shows it is trustworthy.

The way the information is formatted and the style of the graphics along with the logos make me feel confident that these resources have the rights of people with disability front and centre and that the information is good stuff. – sector stakeholder

Recommendation: Where possible, resources should feature real people rather than cartons or illustrations to increase trustworthiness.

Recommendation: DSA could consider featuring its logo more prominently in the app.

Commission's questions and indicators

How well were the intended outputs delivered?

- The resources were delivered very well, because they were well-liked, understood and trusted by the target audiences.
- The delivery in an app with multiple information formats supported the accessibility of the resources.

Did the outputs meet user accessibility and learning needs?

- Yes. Users of the Supporting My Rights resources found them accessible, and easy to understand.
- Key features that enabled accessibility and meeting learning needs included the use of simple language, Auslan translations, captioning, text-to-speech functionality, screen-reader functionality, adjustable font size, WCAG AAA compliance, simple navigation, and the use of images.

Supporting My Rights is effective for the DSA community

Overall, users have reported that Supporting My Rights helps participants and providers understand more about participants' rights, helps participants feel more confident to uphold their rights, and helps providers identify ways to improve their practices.

A core feature of the design of Supporting My Rights is that resources targeting participants and providers are provided together in the same app, and provider resources use the same accessible Easy Read language and format that the participant resources use. The Project Team explained that this is intended to help participants understand what providers are meant to know, and enable participants and providers to work through the set of resources together. This also increases the accessibility of the app to support workers for whom English is a second language, and to those who have lower literacy. This feature was viewed positively, particularly by service providers and stakeholders.

This could be a great resource for a participant to go through with their caregivers or support coordinator when transitioning to new services/service providers or settings in particular (e.g. the 'service providers and workers have a duty to make you feel safe and respected' section). – NDIS provider or worker

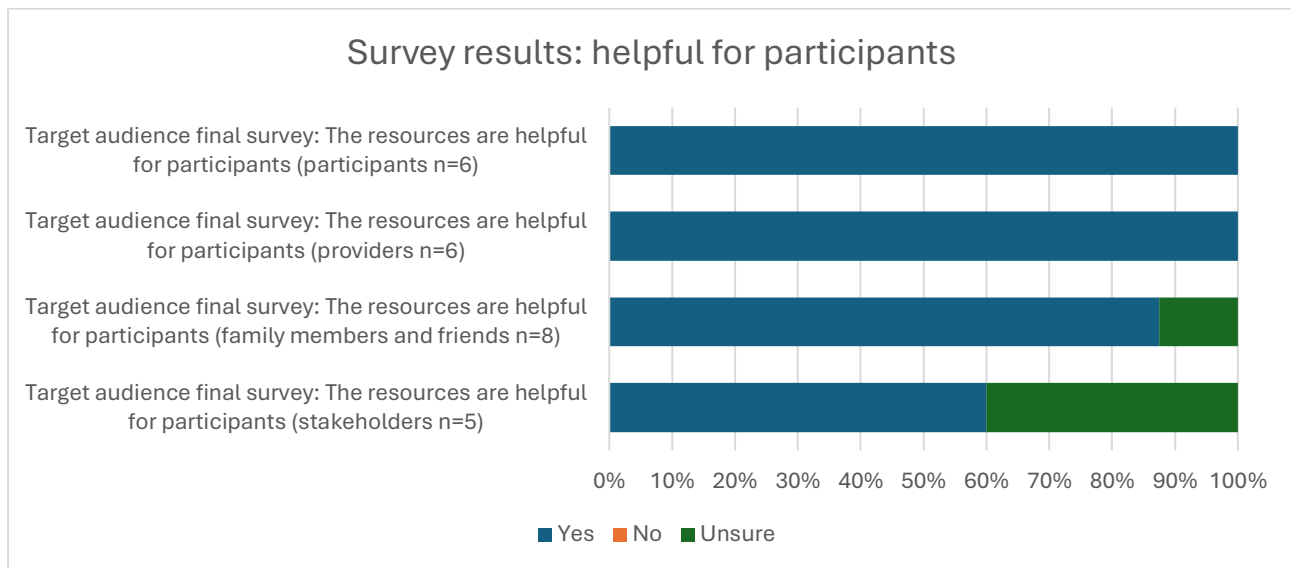
I thought it was brilliant, a brilliant resource for all to teach people about their rights, and I love that the same app would be used for participants and for service providers. – sector stakeholder

Recommendation: The Commission could consider providing other provider-targeted resources in Easy Read formats that enable participants with intellectual disability and providers to review resources together.



Supporting My Rights helps participants understand and uphold their rights

All participants and providers believe the app is helpful for participants.



Some family members and stakeholders said they were unsure. This appears to be due to not wanting to speak on behalf of participants. Some stakeholders gave clear examples of the expected usefulness of the app.

I think I could only accurately answer this question if I were using it with people with disability. But based on my working history I feel that it would have been helpful in those moments where I was talking in the moment about rights with people, it would have been a fabulous resource when I was working to help people living in group homes understand their rights and I would have definitely used this app when teaching staff to understand the rights of the people they were supporting. I also think for service providers who are new to disability that this would be a great first resource for building a service that empowers people with disability. – sector stakeholder

I think that peer to peer style of learning and information sharing is attractive to someone like my family member. The language is straightforward, and the question-and-answer style I think would help my family member. – sector stakeholder

Participants told us that Supporting My Rights helped them feel more confident to exercise their rights, and more confident to make a complaint.

It helped me make a complaint when a support worker didn't do the right thing by me. – NDIS participant

It helps me to speak up about my rights. – NDIS participant

I've seen when my friends have used the app, they've said they understood their rights. They used the app to go to complain about a service or worker and got the problem resolved. – project officer

Someone I know used the app to help understand how something wasn't right for their friend. They shared the app with their friend to help them. – Project Officer

At the VALiD conference, someone I spoke to said she had used the app's practice complaints form to build her confidence to complain. – Project Manager



Project Reference Group members and project team members reported that the app was helpful to them personally. This group have higher familiarity with the app than other prospective users, and so their experience may not be indicative of the experience of other users. Nevertheless, this is a positive outcome.

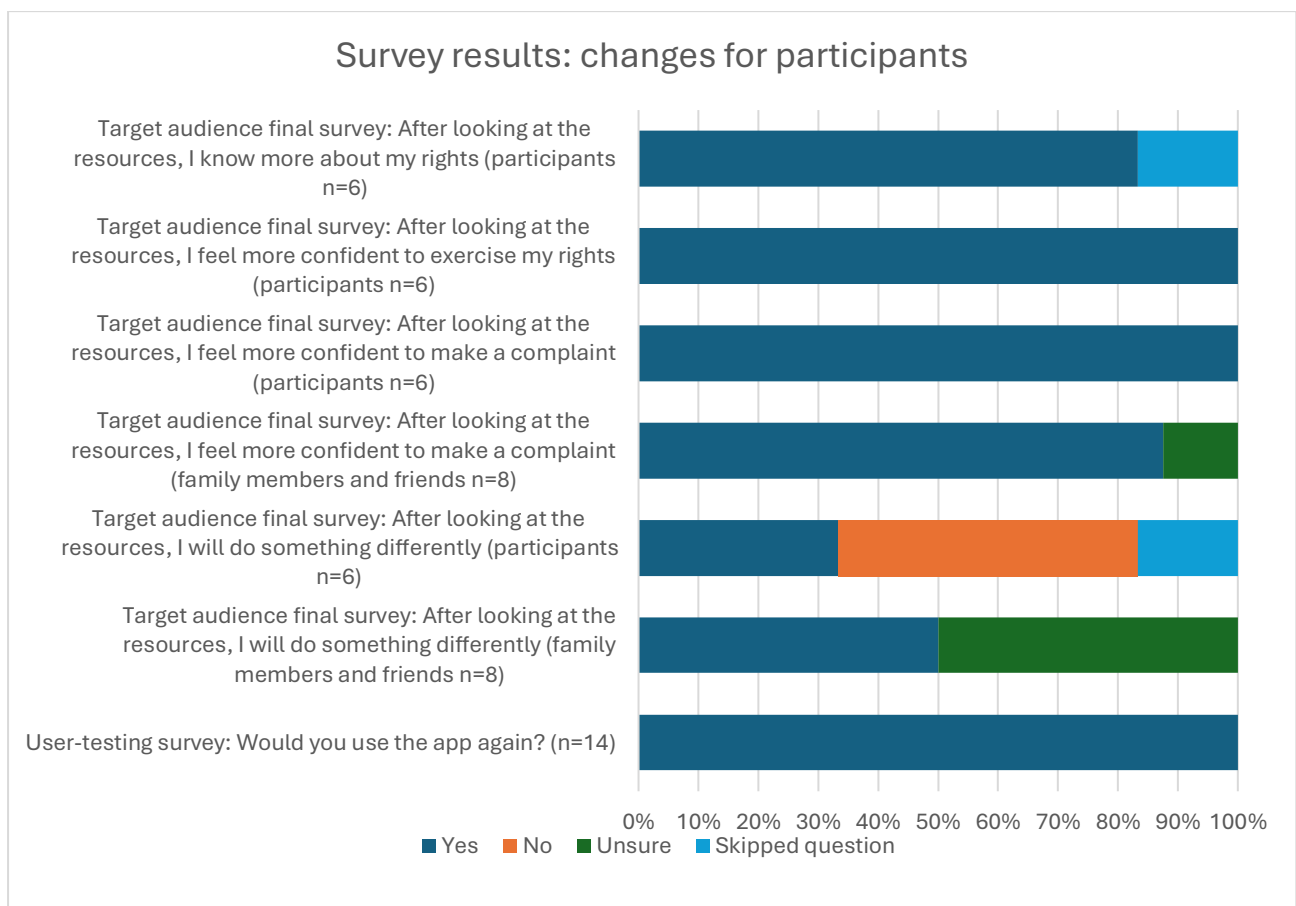
I had an incident with a support worker, they said some inappropriate things to me. The app reminded me that this doesn't feel right, so I complained to the team leader. The support worker and I have built a better relationship on him apologising, and we have a better working relationship now. – Project Officer

One of the co-designers' support worker completely changed their process as a result of this work. It had immediate effect, and was a significant change. – Project Manager

Participants who were interviewed identified several ways that the app showed them they could uphold their rights, emphasising their increased knowledge as a result of the app.

You have the right to tell your support worker how you feel. Being treated equal matters, not being spoken down to. – NDIS participant

Every surveyed participant reported that the app helped them feel more confident to exercise their rights and to make a complaint. Family members and friends of participants also told us they felt more confident to make a complaint.



Only a small number of participants told us that they will do something differently as a result of Supporting My Rights. Survey respondents chose not to leave comments in response to this question. Family members and friends of participants gave some examples of things they will do differently, including advocating on behalf of their family member or friend to a service provider.

I feel more confident in how I approach situations with service providers. – family member or friend



I will pay more attention and look out for unfair treatment. – family member or friend

If budget allows, it would be interesting to carry out a larger survey in the future to further investigate how the app is being used.

Recommendation: The Commission and/or DSA could carry out a survey in the future to understand the experiences of people using Supporting My Rights.

Commission's questions and indicators

% resource users reporting increase knowledge in understanding, exercising or upholding rights

- 83% of surveyed participants reported an increase in knowledge about their rights. (The remainder skipped the question.)

% increase in new knowledge being used to exercise or uphold rights

- 33% of surveyed participants will do something different as a result of using the app.

% increase and types of outcomes experienced by stakeholders engaged in the project

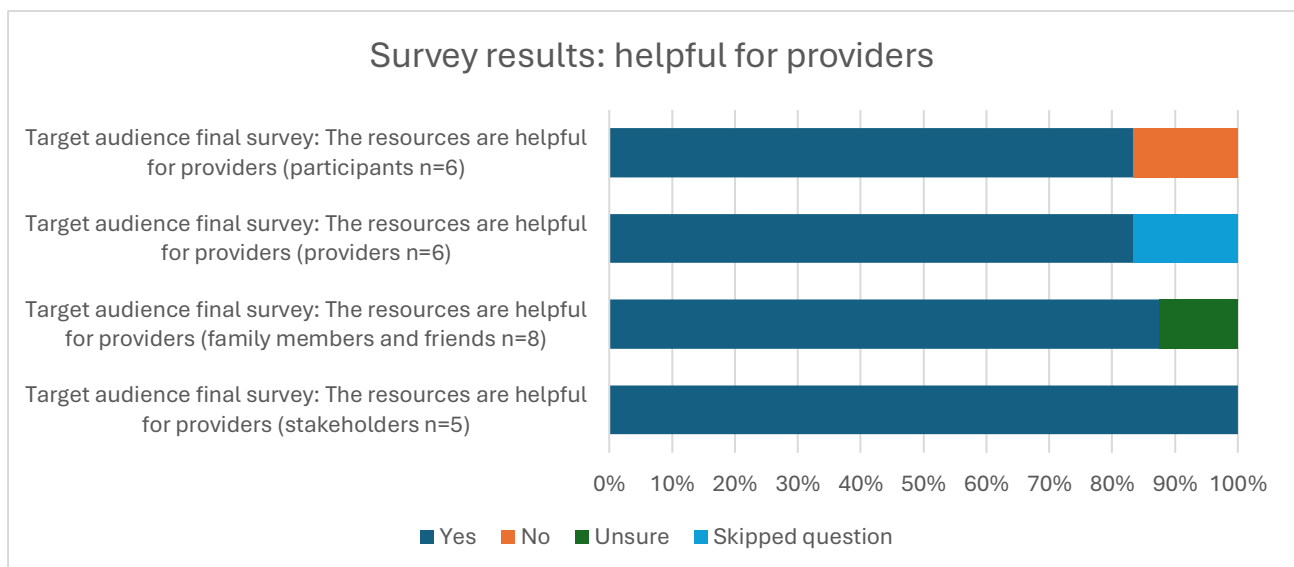
- 100% of surveyed participants reported that they felt more confident to exercise their rights.
- 100% of surveyed participants reported that they felt more confident to make a complaint.

Types of new changes observed

- 1 app user used the app to help them make a complaint
- 1 app user used the practice complaints form to build confidence to complain
- 1 project team member reported that their friend used the app to make a complaint
- 1 project team member reported that a friend used the app to help another friend
- 1 project team member used the app to help them make a complaint
- 1 co-designer had their support worker change processes as a result of this work.

Supporting My Rights helps providers improve their practices

Most people said the app is helpful for providers.



Providers told us that Supporting My Rights improved their knowledge, and helped them identify ways to better uphold participants' rights. Stakeholders saw significant potential for the app to be helpful for providers, and for themselves. Providers described a range of possible use cases.



This will be a useful tool, particularly when service providers discuss Service Agreements and other required documentation. For example, a therapist could have the app downloaded on a work device and show the participant the sections regarding conflict of interest and feedback to support the discussion.

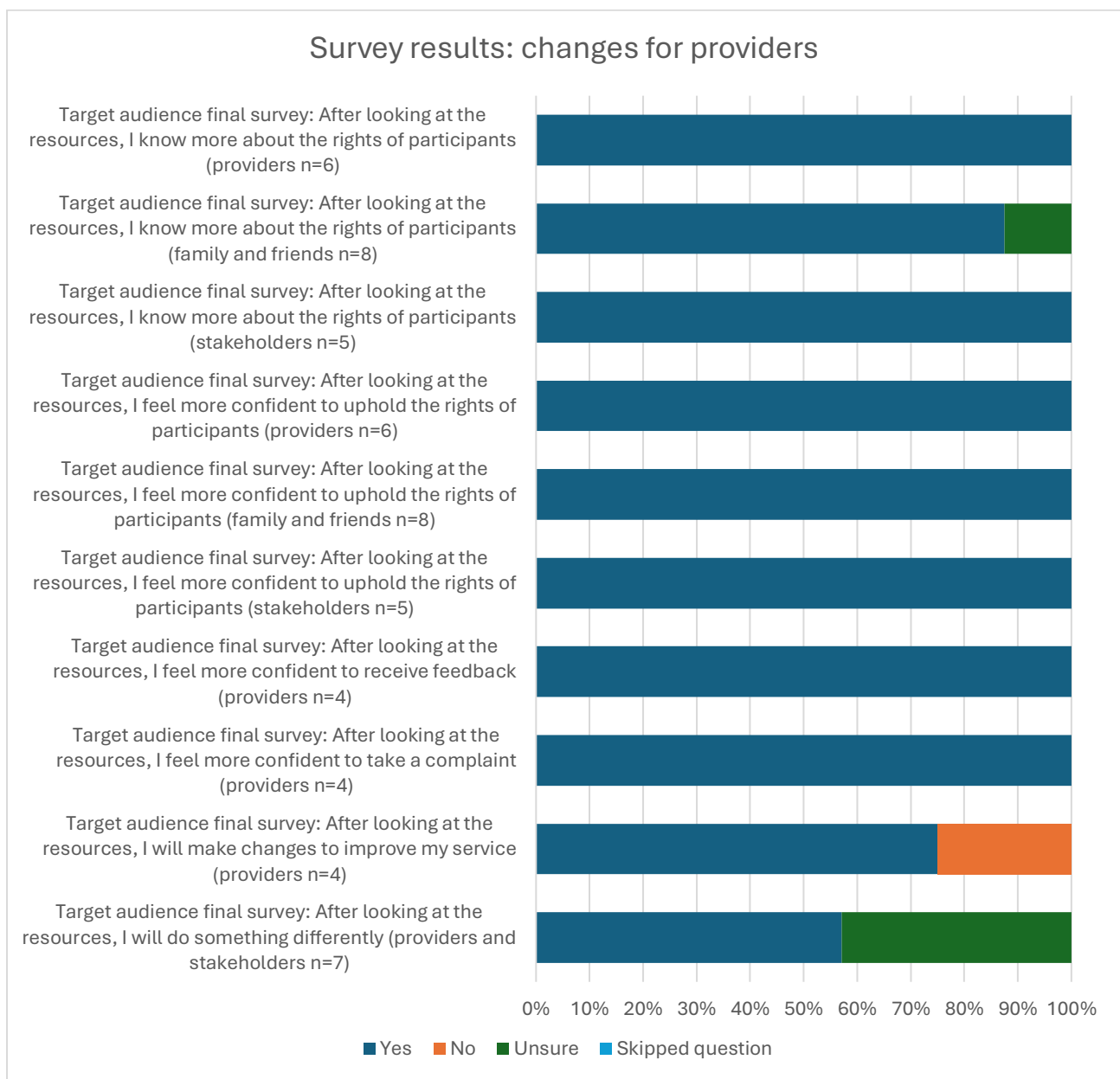
I feel like it if I were having an unsure moment then I could inform my next action based on the information in the app. – sector stakeholder

One provider described being able to use the app to help their friends.

I tried the resources out with friends who were not aware of their rights and it was really helpful. – NDIS provider or worker

All surveyed providers said Supporting My Rights increased their confidence to both receive feedback and take a complaint. One commented:

I want to ensure I am providing a service that upholds the rights - I want the feedback. – NDIS provider or worker



Providers and stakeholders generally articulated an intent to make changes as a result of the app, such as making complaints processes more accessible. No provider gave a concrete example of a change they had already made. One flagged that their ability to initiate changes is limited.

I can't make a direct change but I will use the information to inform discussion – NDIS provider or worker

One stakeholder also described using the app recently to help them declare a conflict of interest and provide feedback.

I recently provided feedback and included a declaration of potential conflict of interest having had this topic front of mind from the app. When providing the feedback, I was nervous and uncomfortable but felt better when I read the information on making a complaint which assured me of the purpose of feedback/complaints for improving services, that we have the right to say what we think and the people seeking the feedback/complaint should act within the NDIS code of conduct which is conveyed in easy dot points. – sector stakeholder

Some survey respondents were unsure if providers would use the app. Multiple stakeholders noted the potential to integrate the app as professional development to increase usage for providers.

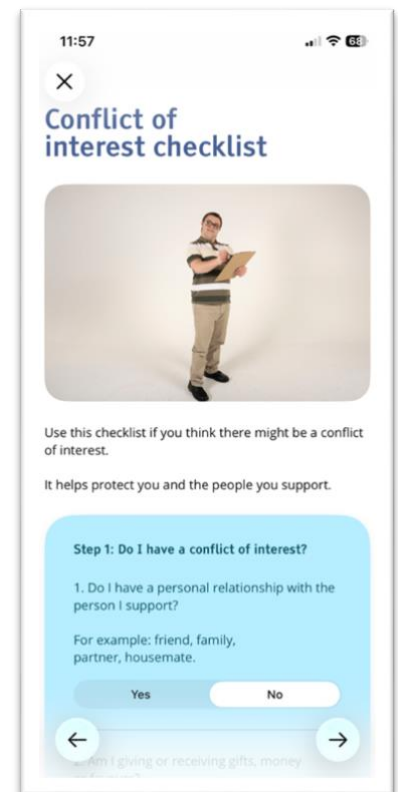
Hardest part is getting staff and providers on board. – NDIS provider or worker

It would be helpful to include this as some sort of PD unit for community workers. – sector stakeholder

Management should instruct their teams to use the app. – sector stakeholder

During interviews, some providers said that the app did not contain new information, but they appreciated the practical examples. They also recognised that it may be useful for other providers with knowledge gaps. Some saw more value in using the app to help their clients understand their rights, rather than building their own understanding of participants' rights.

I think it's a good way for making it accessible for service providers to support people with disabilities to know their rights. And teach them what they can do to protect themselves such as which avenues to take to make complaints. – NDIS provider or worker



Commission's questions and indicators

% resource users reporting increase knowledge in understanding, exercising or upholding rights

- 100% of surveyed providers reported an increase in knowledge about participants' rights.
- 88% of surveyed family members and friends reported an increase in knowledge about participants' rights.
- 100% of surveyed sector stakeholders reported an increase in knowledge about participants' rights.

% increase in new knowledge being used to exercise or uphold rights

- 75% of surveyed providers will make changes to improve their service as a result of using the app.
- 57% of surveyed providers and stakeholders will do something different as a result of using the app.

% increase and types of outcomes experienced by stakeholders engaged in the project

- 100% of surveyed providers, family members and friends, and sector stakeholders reported that they felt more confident to uphold the rights of participants.
- 100% of surveyed providers reported that they felt more confident to receive feedback.
- 100% of surveyed providers reported that they felt more confident to take a complaint.



new right-based practices and approaches implemented by providers

- 1 app user used the app to help their friend to understand their rights.
- 1 app user used the app to help declare a conflict of interest.
- 1 app user used the app help provide feedback.

Outcome sustainability

The timeframe of the evaluation means that we were not able to check in with app users to see if outcomes have been sustained. However, there are positive signs that indicate they may be. Several people noted that the delivery of the resources as an app makes them more able to draw on them in the future as needed. Some people described the resources as memorable. All respondents to the user testing survey said they would use the app again.

The content isn't dry, well designed to be engaging, easy to understand and retain. You would retain it – and know it's there to come back to. – DSA executive team member

Commission's questions and indicators

Were the outcomes sustained?

- While this cannot be determined within the project timeframe, there are some indications that the information may be retained and users may return to the app again in the future.

% retained behavioural changes that occurred since end of project

- This was not able to be assessed within the evaluation timeframe.

Identification of content gaps

A limitation of the type of co-design process used is that the views of a small number of participants shape the resources, and so there may be gaps based on their experiences and knowledge. A consultation process to inform the co-design could be used to help mitigate this gap.

This stakeholder picked up on quite a bit of nuance that wasn't included in the app, whether this was from the content being missed, not enough people participating in the co-design therefore unable to capture everything that people with disability might experience, or it wasn't important to the co-designers therefore was not included. – Project Manager

While the app was overwhelmingly well-received, some people identified content gaps and a desire for the app to contain more, and more detailed, information. Some of the content suggested was out of scope for *GO6984: Knowledge and Skill Development*. Some of the content suggested may be able to fit within the scope of the project.

We need more awareness about providers taking advantage of people with disability by charging them for services that don't cost much outside of the NDIS. – NDIS participant

It's missing the element of helping participants understand how to be respectful to service providers. For example, my daughter has behavioural issues that are part of her disability. If something is unfair she will complain, but can be rude. It would be great to improve the understanding on what is acceptable and not acceptable treatment towards service providers. – sector stakeholder

It needs a section on advocating for your rights – how do you make sure you are getting everything you need? – sector stakeholder



Some constructive feedback provided was contradictory. For example, different stakeholders said the videos were both too long and too short; there was both too much reading, and more reading needed. There is an opportunity for the project team to review the feedback in detail and consider changes they might like to make for future projects. There were no app features that were consistently identified as a problem or gap.

The project team noted that during the evaluation interviews, providers were far more likely than participants to offer constructive criticism and identify room for improvement. This could be due to engaging fewer service providers during the co-design process. A service provider co-design workshop was held early in the process, but only two service providers attended. This limited the extent of perspectives shared. The majority of participants in user testing were service providers, but the use of a survey limited the extent of feedback provided.

However the more limited engagement of service providers in the co-design process gives rise to a core feature of Supporting My Rights: the app contains what NDIS participants with intellectual disability want their service providers to understand, not what service providers themselves think they should understand.

The fact that it's from the participant's perspective I thought was really important. I think sometimes you can just give information to service providers and they just see it from their perspective, and they don't really see it from the participant's perspective. – sector stakeholder

Recommendation: DSA could consider using a wider consultation process to provide input to co-design processes, to support the co-designers to identify things not experienced by anyone in their group.

Recommendation: DSA could emphasise to stakeholder and providers that Supporting My Rights contains the information that participants want them to know, rather than information providers think they might need.

Commission's questions and indicators

How well have the end of project outcomes been achieved?

- There is good evidence that Supporting My Rights has supported the achievement of the end of project outcomes.
- Supporting My Rights has effectively increased people with disability's understanding of their rights.
- There is some evidence that Supporting My Rights has increased people with disability's skills to exercise their rights.
- Supporting My Rights has given people with disability access to resources that help them understand and exercise their rights.
- Supporting My Rights has effectively increased providers' and workers' understanding of their obligations to uphold rights.
- There is some evidence that Supporting My Rights is supporting providers to uphold rights.
- Supporting My Rights has encouraged some providers to increase practices that intend to uphold rights.

How did the Interim outcomes influence the End of project outcomes?

- The achievement of the interim outcomes helped increase the reliability, authenticity, and trustworthiness of the resources. This made the resources more able to achieve the end of project outcomes.

Was the impact positive or negative?

- The impact of Supporting My Rights was positive.
- Multiple people described instances of using the app to better understand and better uphold participants' rights.
- No person involved with the evaluation described any negative outcome associated with the project.



KEQ 3: To what extent do the resources **contribute** to the broader sector?

Criteria of merit: **Contribution** – the extent to which the resources are valued beyond the DSA community, including their usefulness to providers and sector stakeholders, and the reach of the resources.

- Stakeholders indicate that Supporting My Rights is valuable across the disability sector, and has potential applicability in other sectors.
- Stakeholders find the resources useful for themselves, and see potential for them to be used as professional development for service providers.
- Stakeholders are promoting Supporting My Rights. There are opportunities to increase the reach of the app.
- Supporting My Rights is strongly aligned to DSA's role in the sector.
- There is strong demand for additional similar resources covering other topics.

Stakeholders hold positive views of Supporting My Rights

As reported above, 100% of stakeholders who responded to the survey indicated that they like the Supporting My Rights app and found the resources easy to understand. Stakeholders expect the resources to be useful and effective for participants and providers, and all stakeholder survey respondents also found the resources useful for themselves, including in ways that were different from the planned uses.

It's very useful, it's made me think about the way I write comms to make sure it is accessible. – sector stakeholder

If someone contacts me with an advocacy issue, we usually try and resolve it at a grassroots level. This is a good way of getting them to have some autonomy of their own advocacy, helping them to learn the process. – sector stakeholder

I think their informal supports will probably benefit from knowing more about this, because then they can hold providers accountable. Sometimes family members aren't aware enough of disability rights. – sector stakeholder

Stakeholders suggested other audiences that the app could be useful for, including volunteers, and companies that supply goods to people with disability. One stakeholder suggested the content was applicable to aged care, too.

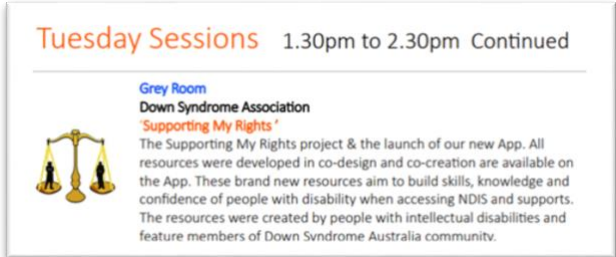
We're more of a distributor of health goods, but we do definitely work with people with disability and we do work with plan managers and coordinators. So I think just having some awareness of how to ensure that we are supporting the rights of participants, and supporting service providers to ensure that they're supporting participants' rights when they're making choices around consumables and healthcare products, I think would be really good. – sector stakeholder

They don't have much experience communicating with people with intellectual disability, but they want to help. – sector stakeholder

In January 2026, the project team presented Supporting My Rights at the VALiD (Victorian Advocacy League For Individuals With Disability) conference. The app was very well received, with conference attendees providing very positive feedback. Similarly, the DSA executive team member noted very positive responses to the app with other stakeholders.




I was at an event where I could pull out my phone and show the app around, the reception has been really great. Every time I talk about it in meetings or with other organisations, everyone is very impressed, especially with the depth of co-design.
– DSA executive team member



Tuesday Sessions 1.30pm to 2.30pm Continued

Grey Room
Down Syndrome Association
'Supporting My Rights'

 The Supporting My Rights project & the launch of our new App. All resources were developed in co-design and co-creation are available on the App. These brand new resources aim to build skills, knowledge and confidence of people with disability when accessing NDIS and supports. The resources were created by people with intellectual disabilities and feature members of Down Syndrome Australia community.

Potential for use as professional development

Unexpectedly, many providers and stakeholders identified the potential of using Supporting My Rights as part of a formal professional development program. Stakeholders view the app as likely to be very useful for providers, but unlikely to be seen by providers without significant promotion. Incorporation into a professional development program is seen by some stakeholders as a way to increase the reach of the app to providers, or in some cases as a way to get reluctant providers to engage with the material.

It's great for people that are new to the sector. I've only been in the sector a year, and I hadn't thought about a lot of things that came up in the app. – sector stakeholder

It needs a push for service providers to use this as part of their onboarding or compliance checks. When you have providers doing their Cert III or IV, they should use the app to introduce them to rights. – sector stakeholder

The providers might use the app if they were paid to do it as professional development. – sector stakeholder

It would be helpful to include this as some sort of PD unit for community workers. – sector stakeholder

It might be good to put the app into volunteer training, especially for people who don't have experience in the sector. – sector stakeholder

This demonstrates the significant value that sector stakeholders see in Supporting My Rights.

Both DSA and the Commission could consider how this might work. Supporting My Rights could be recommended as part of the introductory materials for some induction or professional development opportunities.

Recommendation: DSA and the Commission could consider ways to use Supporting My Rights as part of induction or professional development opportunities, including with their stakeholder networks.

Stakeholders are promoting Supporting My Rights

Interviewed stakeholders were asked about any plans to promote Supporting My Rights, and most identified some activity, including putting it in the newsletter, posting about it on social media, circulating it through the Board of Directors' networks, encouraging facilitators to promote the app directly to families, and listing it on their website.

The positive views that stakeholders hold about the app are influential in the decision to support its promotion, and thereby increase its reach. The authenticity and depth of co-design are key factors for stakeholders in deciding to promote the app.

Those podcasts, visibly seeing people talk about it from that community was incredible. I think it is so nice to have people with disability talking about their rights rather than being told by just the same old sort of looking people and voices and all that kind of stuff, just to have it from that community was super powerful. – sector stakeholder



Recommendation: DSA should continue to increase awareness about the app amongst its stakeholder networks.

More work promoting Supporting My Rights will increase its impact

Resources must be seen by their target audience in order to be effective. Several stakeholders noted that more work needs to be done to promote Supporting My Rights.

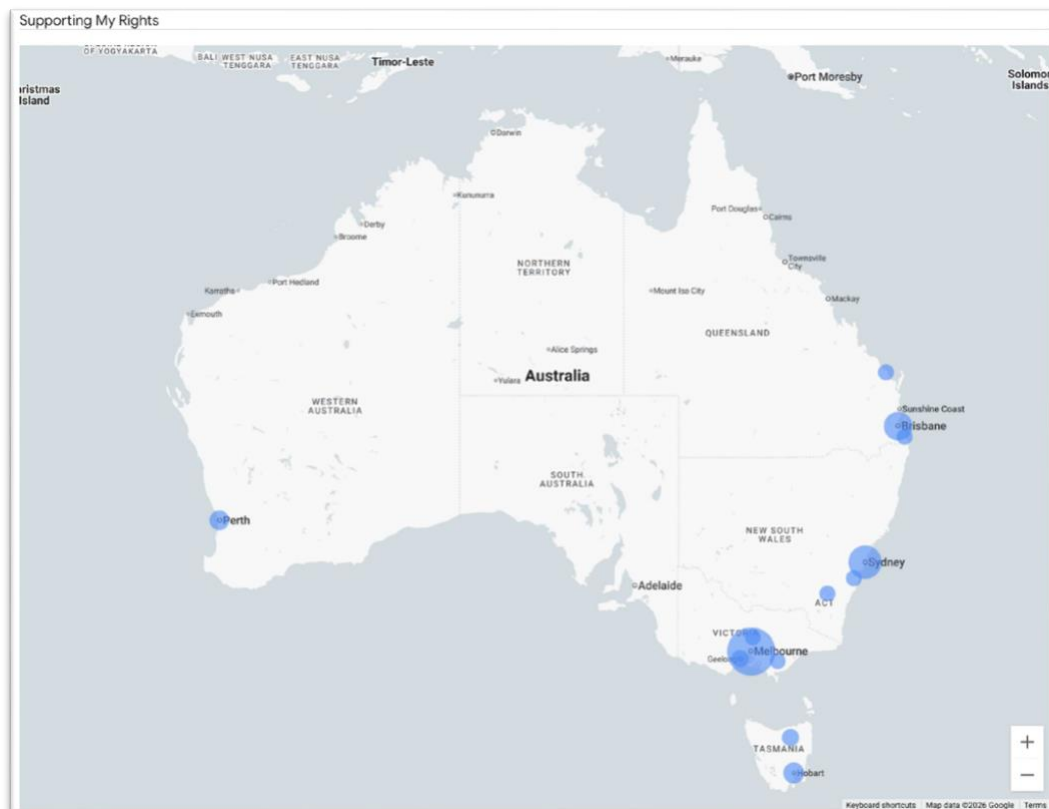
It needs more marketing. – sector stakeholder

As at 31 January 2026, Supporting My Rights has had **211** total app downloads.

Location	Number of downloads
Apple App Store	172
Google Play Store (Android)	39
Total	211

This is a good start but does not yet align with the potential of Supporting My Rights to make a difference for participants and providers, nor with the extensive networks held by DSA and its stakeholders. While the grant application did not propose a specific reach for the resources, the reach so far is only a tiny fraction of the number of people in Australia who may benefit from them. More specific, deliberate work is needed to promote the app and encourage use.

From November 2025 to January 2026, the DSA website had recorded 440 hits across the set of Supporting My Rights webpages, representing 88 website users. Most website users are located in Melbourne, with some website users in other capital cities and regional areas. The DSA office and most DSA team members are located in Melbourne.



Locations of Supporting My Rights website users.



The November 2025 app launch included posts on the DSA social media accounts, which garnered 4933 impressions across Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Post	Impressions	Engagement rate
Facebook post 1	1303	4.76%
Facebook post 2	957	3.45%
Instagram post 1	438	5.25%
Instagram post 2	316	4.11%
LinkedIn post 1	579	6.74%
LinkedIn post 2	1340	6.49%
Total	4933	5.13%

Supporting My Rights has also been promoted by DSA stakeholders.

Further work is planned in 2026 to promote Supporting My Rights. There may be opportunities for the Commission to support the promotion.

The online tools in use do not provide more information about the demographic profile of those being reached. The evaluation target audience final survey gathered demographic data about respondents, which gives some indication of who is using Supporting My Rights. The small sample size means this should be interpreted with extreme caution. The results suggest that the app is reaching participants who are young people and adults but not older adults, mostly reaching people in metro areas, and has some reach across Australian states and territories.

Respondent type	Location	State	Age
Participants (n=6)	Suburb n=5 Large town n=1	VIC n=4 WA n=1 QLD n=1	Young person 25 or under n=3 Adult n=3
Providers (n=6)	Suburb n=4 City n=2	VIC n=2 NSW n=1 SA n=1 TAS n=1 WA n=1	Adult n=5
Family members or friends (n=8)	Suburb n=5 City n=2 Small town n=1	VIC n=5 WA n=2 QLD n=1	Adult n=8
Stakeholders	Suburb n=2 City n=2 Small town n=1	NSW n=3 ACT n=1 VIC n=1	Adult n=5

Recommendation: DSA and the Commission should identify new opportunities to promote the app to its target users.

Commission's questions and indicators

Did the outputs reach the intended priority cohorts and geographical areas?

- There is some weak evidence that the app is reaching younger people as well as adults with intellectual disability.
- There is some weak evidence that the app is mostly being used in metropolitan areas.

new resource users (hits, attendance, calls)

- 211 app downloads as at 31 January 2026

Priority cohorts reached

- People with intellectual disability
- Young people



Geographical reach

- There is some weak evidence that the app is reaching people across Australia.

Supporting My Rights is well-aligned to DSA's role in the disability sector

Supporting My Rights is well-aligned to all three Strategic Pillars in the DSA Strategic Framework 2025-2028:

1. Improve quality of life for people with Down syndrome
2. Build capacity and collaboration amongst the Down syndrome community
3. Lead change in society's awareness, attitudes and behaviours.

The DSA executive team member particularly highlighted how the app helps improve the lives of people with Down syndrome. The project showed strong capacity building for the DSA community members who participated in the co-design process, and there is good evidence that Supporting My Rights is improving the confidence and capacity of NDIS participants with intellectual disability to uphold their rights. The vision of the project to extend more broadly than people with Down syndrome and intellectual disability, by reaching providers, helps to lead societal change, and the potential to reach beyond the intended audiences strengthens this.

It's a really lovely example of how we're achieving our mission. – DSA executive team member

All stakeholders interviewed agreed that Supporting My Rights is aligned with their understanding of DSA's role in the sector. Stakeholders commented on both the purpose of the app and the way that it was made when explaining this.

Having the ambassadors and people in the podcasts aligns with everything DSA. It's about valuing the opinions and lived experience of people with intellectual disability. – sector stakeholder

It's exactly what I think Down Syndrome Australia should be doing. – sector stakeholder

Commission's questions and indicators

What difference was made?

- Supporting My Rights is helping NDIS participants with intellectual disability know and exercise their rights when accessing NDIS services
- Supporting My Rights is helping NDIS providers and workers more effectively uphold the rights of NDIS participants, including making changes to their practices
- Supporting My Rights is improving the quality of life for people with intellectual disability.
- Supporting My Rights has helped grow capacity and capability amongst people with intellectual disability.
- Supporting My Rights is helping improve people's attitudes and behaviours towards people with intellectual disability.

There is strong demand for additional similar resources

Supporting My Rights focuses on specific topics defined by GO6984: *Knowledge and Skill Development*. Participants, providers and stakeholders all identified other topics they would like to see in the app.

It needs more topics. It needs a topic on relationships. – NDIS participant

We would love to see resources about other topics and other areas of rights – family member or friend

Is it just disability rights? Could it also cover diversity and Aboriginal rights in the app? As well as include LGBTQ rights? – NDIS provider or worker



For most people, this was not about identifying gaps, but rather, they like the format and how the information is presented, and they want more topics presented like this.

Survey respondents were asked to select from a list of topics that they would like to have more resources on. Respondents could select multiple options from the list. This shows that there is strong demand for similar kinds of resources on a wide range of topics.

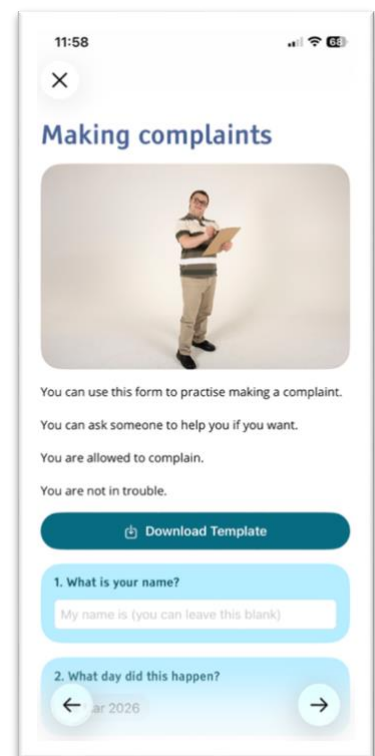
Topic	Number of respondents
Safety in the community	15
Supported decision-making	15
Respect for people with disabilities	13
Being included at work	12
Respect for dignity and making our own choices	12
Discrimination and bullying	11
Feeling included	11
Human rights	11
Participating in the community	10
Dignity of risk	9
Health and safety at work	9
Inclusion on public transport	8
Non-discrimination	8
Accessibility	7
Training and career advancement	6
Other (please specify)	Health; how to create disability-friendly roles in a workplace; LGBTQIA+ community; safety and rights with police.

During interviews, stakeholders raised a range of other potential topics. Some of these, such as human rights overall and rights for other communities (such as the LGBTQIA+ community), are not well-aligned to DSA's role. Some of the suggestions may be worth exploring for people with intellectual disability, including:

- How to make a complaint with the NDIA
- Violence and abuse against people with disability
- Financial advice
- Power of attorney
- How to get a birth certificate
- Rights around access to environments
- How to make decisions on NDIS consumables
- Health and wellbeing
- Interacting with health services
- Leadership
- Employment
- Respect and how to have an engaging and long-lasting relationship with service providers.

Stakeholders explained that the way that Supporting My Rights helps service providers to understand the participants' point of view has potential applications in other fields, such as healthcare.

Like, if there's a doctor or a nurse in a hospital, and someone comes in who has an intellectual disability, even with a support worker, how's that doctor supposed to conduct the consultation? So it's coming at it from the



participants point of view, this is what you can expect and this you know this is what you can ask. These are your rights within the health setting. I think that could be good. – sector stakeholder

There is also the option to add more topics to the existing Supporting My Rights app, which could be based on existing resources. The way that the app is branded means it could easily accommodate a range of other topics targeting a broad range of people with disabilities.

The app has huge potential to be expanded on, and be something that both service providers and participants can use daily. It's unique in the way it presents information. There's potential to grow into different areas. – sector stakeholder

Recommendation: DSA could explore funding opportunities to address new topics in a format similar to Supporting My Rights. The Commission could explore opportunities to fund an expansion of the app through adding other topics within its remit, and make other agencies (such as the NDIA) aware of the opportunity to do the same.



Summary

The evaluation sought to answer three key questions about Supporting My Rights:

1. To what extent was the **co-design** process effective and appropriate?
2. To what extent are the **resources** useful and effective for the DSA community?
3. To what extent do the resources **contribute** to the broader sector?

We found that the **co-design** process was **exemplary**, and was both **highly effective and highly appropriate** for the project. The process was inclusive, respectful and empowering for co-designers, and was instrumental in supporting the development of high quality resources. There are opportunities to increase the extent of the engagement with providers.

The **resources** are **likely to be useful and effective** for the DSA community. They are clear, accessible and liked by community members. There is sound evidence that the resources **meaningfully deliver the intended behaviour changes**, increasing knowledge of the rights of NDIS participants among people with intellectual disability and providers, and supporting increased confidence and improved practices to uphold these rights.

The resources **have potential to contribute** to the broader sector. They are valued by providers and stakeholders, and seen as useful. However, at the time of writing (March 2026), the **reach** of the resources (demonstrated through the number of app downloads) **remains limited**, and needs to be improved to achieve the project's **full potential to contribute** to the broader sector and improve the lives of people with Down syndrome and intellectual disability.

