

# Now & Next symposium for professionals fosters collaboration for the future

**Developed in-house, Plumtree's Now & Next Program and the Pictability visioning tool have empowered families of children with disability in Australia and overseas to take charge of their journey. Our innovations are also attracting interest from universities and organisations.**

Developed in-house, Plumtree's Now & Next Program and the Pictability visioning tool have empowered families of children with disability in Australia and overseas to take charge of their journey. Our innovations are also attracting interest from universities and organisations.

Held in Melbourne, the Building Family Capability Through Participation: Now & Next Research Symposium brought together Australian and international academics, researchers, parents of children with a disability, and professionals from early intervention and disability support services. The symposium aimed to foster connections, ideas and collaboration that informs future developments of Now & Next and building family capacity.

We've come a long way since the program's establishment in 2015. A summary of findings and outcomes was presented by Plumtree Research Analyst and Peer Worker Mogi Bayasgalan. Over the day, the passionate attendees discussed future actions and strategies.

"Now & Next is a promising program," said Dr Tim Moore, Senior Research Fellow at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute that conducted an external evaluation in 2018. While the NDIS is largely based around support for the child, Now & Next involves achieving positive outcomes for the entire family and building authentic partnerships with professionals.

With all parties interested in further research to make the program even more effective, Dr Moore believes Now & Next can have big ramifications for how families work with the NDIS. "Where the NDIS should end up is the notion of empowered persons with disability who know what they want, know how to get it, and know when they are not getting it."



Dr Anoo Bhojti from La Trobe University's School of Allied Health will review the program's ethics application process that enables the submission of research to universities for publication in peer-reviewed journals. This will build more evidence on Now & Next's positive outcomes and impact on families.

Representing the Melbourne Disability Institute Project, Associate Professor Peggy Kern from the University of Melbourne's Centre for Positive Psychology will examine Now & Next's research and evaluation methods used to date. The results will help build a foundation for long-term research into the future. It could involve follow-up contact with Now & Next alumni on the program's benefits, or a trial spanning several years that tracks outcomes compared to standard care methods. She believes that Now & Next's vision of family empowerment and goals could inform changes in future NDIS legislation.

The symposium was a wonderful opportunity to meet professionals with a shared vision, develop ideas and create pathways for working together.

Find out more about Now & Next

<https://citizen-network.org/resources/now-and-next-report.html>

View a February 2020 webinar about Now & Next at NCAPPS <https://ncapps.acl.gov/webinars.html>

Want to collaborate with us? Get in touch <https://plumtree.org.au/contact-us/>

Now and Next external Evaluation

<https://plumtree.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Now-and-Next-evaluation-Murdoch-Childrens-Research-Institute.pdf>

