

Directing the Life You Want to Live

Self-direction offers people with disability the chance to have greater control over the decisions and choices that direct their life.

When this involves government funding, self-direction means that you have the freedom to direct your own funding. You can choose the supports and other resources you require based on your individual needs, goals and way of life. This can either be on your own or with the help of your close supporters. This could involve quite a change in thinking for people who have always been involved with traditional services. You will no longer be limited to accepting support from a service that may or may not meet your real needs.

What kind of life do I want to live?

- To make the most of the opportunity offered by self-direction it helps to be clear about the kind of life you want to live and the resources and supports you need to do that.
- A good life can mean different things to different people. Most people, however, see a good life as being one where they are connected to people who love and care about them, a life where they are recognised for the contribution they make through work or through being part of their community and where they are able to pursue their interests and passions.
- The video, [Living a good life - Adam](#), shows how Adam and his family have used a number of strategies available to them through a self-directed approach to ensure that he is living a satisfying and inclusive life and that this life can continue into the future.
- Narissa Wilson writes that directing her own support "has allowed me the flexibility and freedom to live a life style that is bound by my choices, in my home and community. I now have the ability to build the relationships with the people I choose to be part of my life." Read more in her story, [Leading my life through my vision](#).
- Frances McKennary describes the change in her brother Greg's life as seeing him "developing an awareness of 'self' which had diminished under the administration of the well intentioned 'care' of the past." Read more in [Greg's Journey to a Better Life](#).
- The stories, [My Quest](#) and [Morning in Tewantin](#), show how people have achieved a more inclusive life for themselves or their family members by being clear about what they want in their life and by creatively managing their support to achieve that.

How has self-direction made a difference?

Funding alone, no matter how it is distributed, cannot guarantee that you will live a good life. However, self-direction does offer the advantage of allowing you to be more focused about how you use those funds. You will have the chance to buy the kind of resources and supports you want based on your assessed need and to purchase them from a wide range of places, not just from traditional disability services.

- In this video Beryl Leggat talks about the difference self-direction has made to her son's life after only a short period of time.

Video Available Online only

- David Goldsmith describes the difference to his life once he could choose his own support: "Until we did this ourselves, (self-direction) money was spent on things I wasn't interested in and that is a waste". Read more of David's story in [Re-shaping a Life:changing the hole to fit the peg](#).
- For Lisa Lehman the difference to her life started once she started "thinking about what I need and want separately from the needs my disability creates and then breaking these into identifiable roles". Read more in her story [Being at the Centre of my Life](#).
- The article, [The strengths and limitations of funding in creating a good life](#), is a reminder that funding itself does not create a good life. The article also suggests a way of thinking about using a mix of paid and unpaid support to help create the kind of life you would like to live.

Other resources

Everyone's life will be different but all the stories mentioned here show how people have achieved a more inclusive life for themselves or their family members by being clear about what they want in their life and by creatively managing their own support to achieve that

- In this video, Will Proctor talks here about the impact self-direction has had on his life, particularly his ability to be part of his community.

Video Available Online only

- The story, [It's all about Matthew](#), shows how Matthew is now able to "fill his week with things that make sense for him..not to just 'fit in' with others".
- In their story, [What self-direction has meant to our son and his family](#), Cheryl and Peter Allen describe self-direction as a "breath of fresh air" in their son's life and says it gives them "a real sense of autonomy and the freedom to hire the most appropriate persons for this role. We now manage our sons' lifestyle in a more relaxed and positive way and our own health, wellbeing and family life have improved."
- Additional stories and articles relevant to self-direction can be found in Edition 43 of *Crucial Times* from the [Community Resource Unit](#) and also in many editions of the journal, *Think About*, which can be ordered from [Belonging Matters](#).