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Disability housing program suffers with market mistrust

- Investors see Specialist Disability Accommodation program as risky due to lack of key information about demand and sector needs
- Government needs to actively shape emerging disability housing market to support information flow and promote investment confidence
- Research findings to be presented at SDA Conference on Fri 22 March

The Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) program, designed to increase housing for people with disability, is suffering because the market is perceived as being highly uncertain, creating challenges to secure finance and convince investors, new AHURI research finds.

The research, [**Understanding Specialist Disability Accommodation funding**](#), undertaken for AHURI by researchers from the University of South Australia (UniSA) and University of Tasmania, asked developers, investors, housing providers and governments how the SDA program can generate new supply that meets the needs and preferences of people with disability.

'We interviewed people in major Australian banks, specialised finance providers, large property developers, community housing providers and consultants working across the industry and found a number of risks and issues that restricted their involvement with SDA,' said lead researcher **Professor Andrew Beer** from UniSA.

'These risks included a lack of high-quality data on both the current supply of dwellings and the number of NDIS packages being approved, as well as concern about whether the government would guarantee the long-term funding of SDA into the future.'

While not-for-profit organisations are central to the rollout of the SDA program, they work in close partnership with a range of for-profit sector enterprises such as large banks and specialised finance providers. These organisations see the SDA market as highly uncertain, creating challenges with respect to securing finance and convincing investors. Furthermore, the specialised nature of the housing and the eligibility of tenants makes it difficult to price, and therefore difficult to value.

'The most effective solution would be for government agencies, including the National Disability Insurance Agency, to take on a stewardship role and actively work to shape the emerging SDA market,' says Professor Beer. 'Government needs to create the conditions that make all the elements of SDA both possible and available to those Australians living with disability who are eligible.'

Other solutions identified by the research include a great need to organise and distribute information across the sector, with key information around demand and supply that is focused on sector needs; make available templates and assessment tools to planners so as to clarify and streamline decision-making; and greater clarity around roles and responsibilities, including collection of data and how to facilitate flexibility when clients' needs and desires change over time.

The report can be downloaded from the AHURI website at

<https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/310>

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The research findings will be presented at the [Get Building SDA National Conference](#) on Fri 22 March 2019.