

Intellectual Disability & Health



What is it?

Intellectual disability is a neurodevelopmental condition diagnosed based on deficits in intellectual and adaptive functioning that emerge during the developmental period. ^[1]



There are about **450,000** people with intellectual disability in Australia ^[2]

About **1.86%** of Australians have an intellectual disability ^[3]

There are **4,938** NDIS participants with an intellectual disability in Western Victoria ^[10]



What Causes it? ^[4]

Genetic factors

- Chromosomal abnormalities
- Genetic inheritance

Environmental Factors

- Prenatal toxin exposure
- Pregnancy and birth complications
- Early childhood disease or injury



What does it look like? ^[1]

Intellectual disability can range from mild to profound and may be a visible disability or not.

Mild

(IQ 50-70)

- 85% of cases
- Can live independently with minimum levels of support
- Most daily living skills can be learned

Moderate

(IQ 35-50)

- 10% of cases
- Independent living may be achieved with moderate levels of support, such as those available in group homes

Severe

(IQ 20-35)

- 4% of cases
- Requires daily assistance with self-care activities and safety supervision
- Typically limited verbal skills

Profound

(IQ <20)

- 1% of cases
- Requires 24/7 support for every aspect of daily living
- Typically nonverbal

Intellectual Disability is diagnosed using a combination of: ^[5]

Psychometric tests



Adaptive Functioning



Clinical Judgement



People with an intellectual disability experience significantly worse health outcomes than other Australians ^[2]

2.5x as many health conditions ^[7]



Life expectancy up to 27 years shorter ^[6]

Twice the rate of ED visits and hospital admissions ^[8]



Twice the rate of avoidable deaths ^[6]



Higher rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and mental illness ^[8]



In 2019 it was recognised that

[12]

Primary health care is not adequately meeting the needs of people with ID

Significant barriers to accessing primary care

Lower use of preventative healthcare services

Half of medical conditions go underdiagnosed or undetected

Worse health outcomes over a lifetime

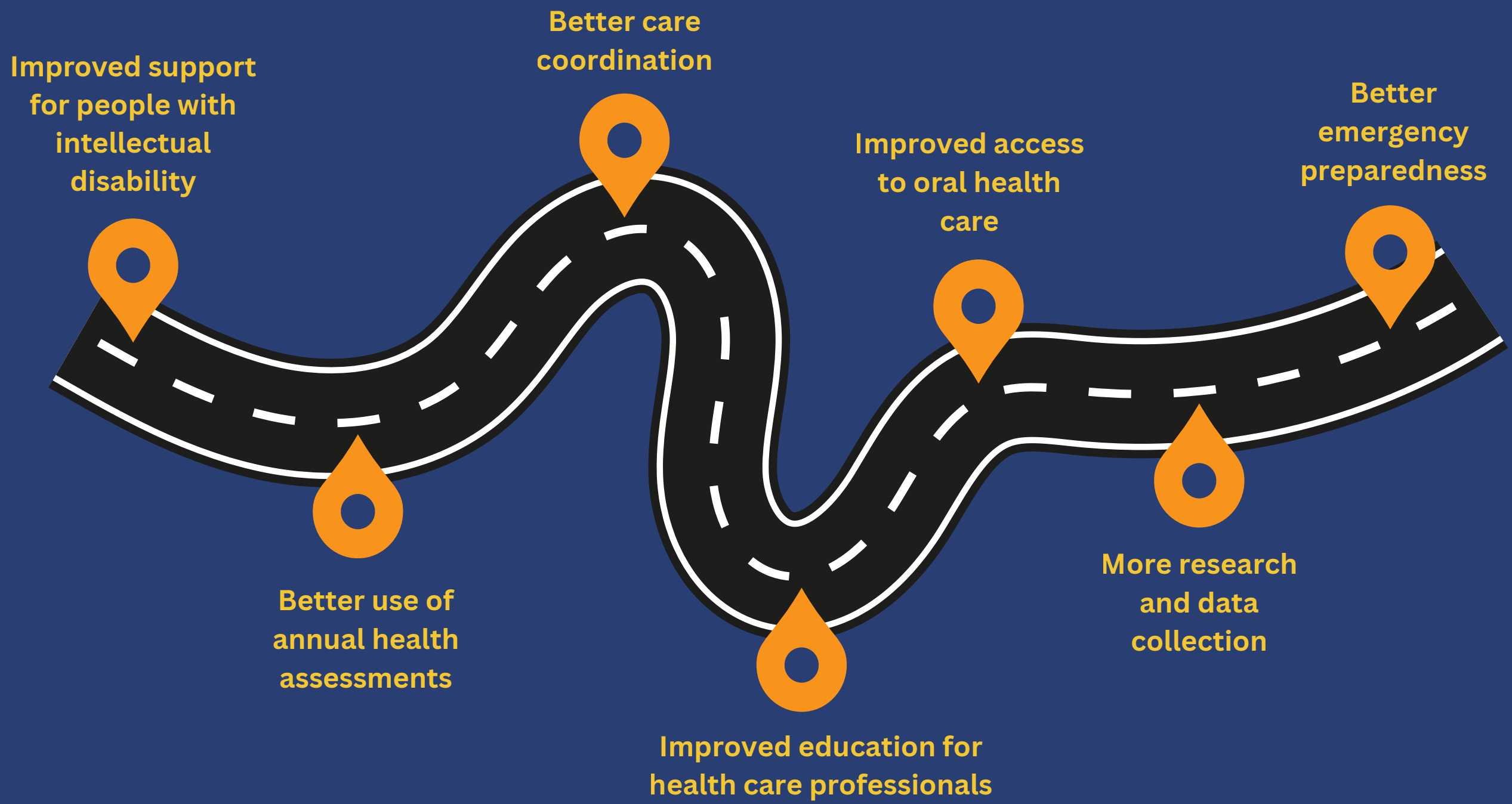
[8]

There are significant barriers to accessing adequate primary health care ^[9]

- Lack of knowledge about intellectual disability
- Communication issues
- Negative attitudes
- Lack of reasonable adjustments
- Siloed approach to health care management



Since 2021, the Australian Government has developed the **National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with an Intellectual Disability** ^[11]



WVPHN is participating in the **Primary Care Enhancement Program** as part of the National Roadmap ^[12]



The **Primary Care Enhancement Program** is also being implemented by PHNs in: ^[12]

Central and Eastern Sydney

Central Queensland, Wide Bay and Sunshine Coast

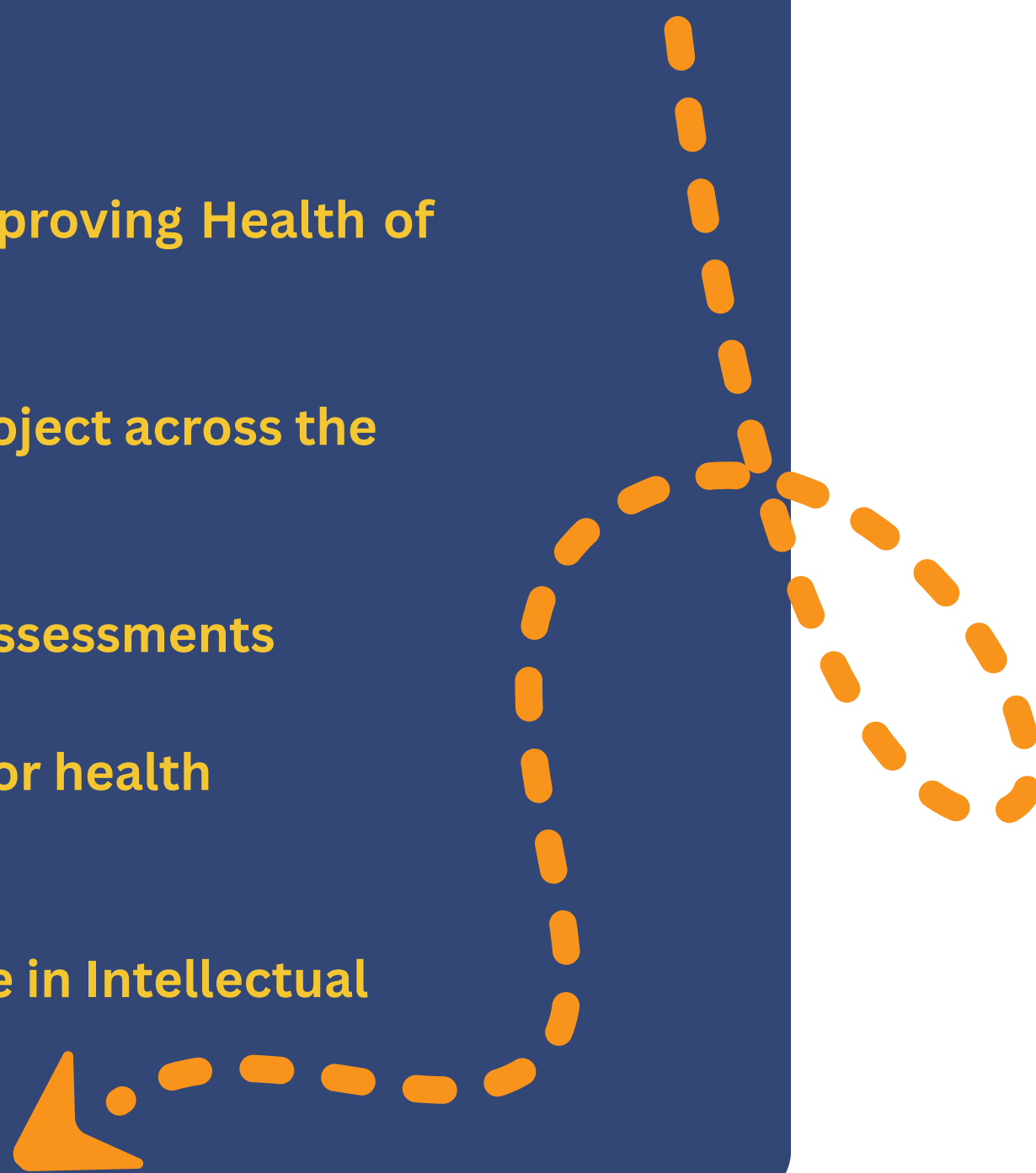
Tasmania



What's Next?

The next stages of the National Roadmap for Improving Health of People with an Intellectual Disability include: ^[12]

- Continuing the primary care enhancement project across the country
- Improving implementation of annual health assessments
- Developing a national education curriculum for health professionals
- Establishing the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health



Further Reforms

The following recommendations were made to further improve primary health care for people with an intellectual disability over the next 10 years ^[12]

- Increase access to equitable and affordable primary care
- Encourage multidisciplinary care
- Data and digital reform for primary care
- Support organisational and cultural change in the primary care sector.



'Everyone needs to understand that people with intellectual disability can have a good life. We need great health care and support to get it, [and to have] the same quality of life as everyone else.'
- Judy Huett ^[11]



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