

Culturally Safe Assistive Technology (AT) Provision

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme

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Culturally safe Assistive Technology (AT) provision

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Artwork

“Growth”

Eulalia Martin (Banuba/Gija)
for iLA, acrylic on canvas, 2022

@eulalia_nawajarri_designs



Cultural safety

“Cultural safety is met through actions from the majority position which recognise, respect, and nurture the unique cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is recipient of a service or interaction can determine whether it is culturally safe.”

Closing the Gap, Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet



Wellness & Reablement

“After a bushfire, many things sprout. Trees are germinated and come to life after fires, and that conversation of rising from those ashes is important and runs parallel with your life and growing older...

There are many things that come out of it.”

Aunty Elly Chatfield,
a proud Gamillaroi woman
(2022 LiveUp research project)



Strong roots



Strong seeds



Strong support



Strong habits



Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology, 'AT'
is an umbrella term for

Assistive Products and
Services that optimise
functioning and reduce the
experience of disability

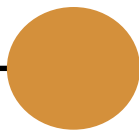


Research journey (so far)



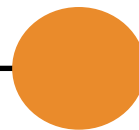
2022/3

Foundational research that identified broader issue around cultural safety
Participants - 36



2022/3

Research to investigate issue and identify barriers and mitigating actions
Participants - 50



2022/3

Practice analysis to map 2023/4 learnings against published guidelines (under peer review)
Feedback round from previous participants



Contributors

Arrernte	Gundungurra	Paredarerme
Dharug	Jagera	Turrbal
Dja Dja	Jaru	Wiradjuri
Wurrung	Kaurna	Yarrowair
Gamilaroi	Larrakia	Yorta Yorta
Giabal	Miriwoong	Yuin
Gubbi Gubbi	Ngunnawal	
Gunditjmara	Ngambri	

Bungree Aboriginal Association (NSW)

Carbal Medical Services (QLD)

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative (VIC)

Karadi Aboriginal Corporation (TAS)

Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative (VIC)

The Purple House (NT)

Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care (NSW)

Campfire x

Guriwal Aboriginal Corporation

What we heard

“Even AT as a tool of self-management, it’s a white lens and government speak”

Traditional Custodian, Jarowait & Giabel Nations

“We need to deepen older First Nations people’s **experiences of AT with culture, country, and community**, those things are their protection to help them thrive as they grow older.”

Traditional Custodian, Yuin Nation



Healthy ageing goal	Low-risk AT	Purpose
I spend quality time with family, friends, kin	Double handed mug	To have longer yarns and share stories
I feel comfortable and safe inside and outside the house	Button hook	To participate in community events
I have a strong sense of place and cultural pride	Built up gardening tools	To care for traditional plants
I enjoy the present, even on hard days	Soft cup headphones	To listen to songs in-language
I make my own decisions with agency	Long handled hairbrush	To manage self-care
I am respected for contributing to others' growth	Car transfer bar	To take grandchildren to school and Country
I manage illness and injury	Large print calendar	To remember health appointments
I experience, learn, and achieve new things	Lap tray desk	To practice and share traditional craft
I eat healthy, balanced foods	Kitchen stool	To cook own meals
I am financially secure and well	Timer switch	To turn off power appliances

The challenge

Global report on assistive technology (WHO 2022)

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- 2.5 billion people need on or more assistive products
- 3.5 billion people by 2050

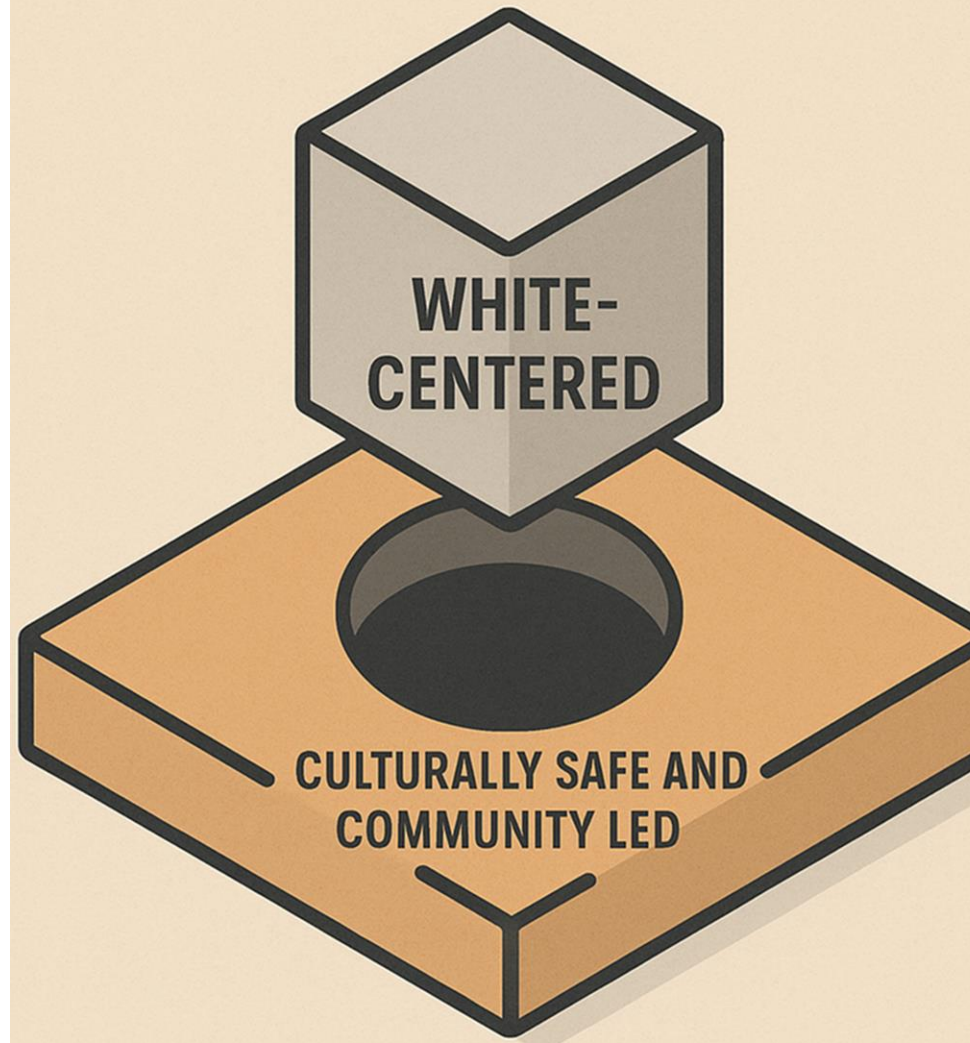


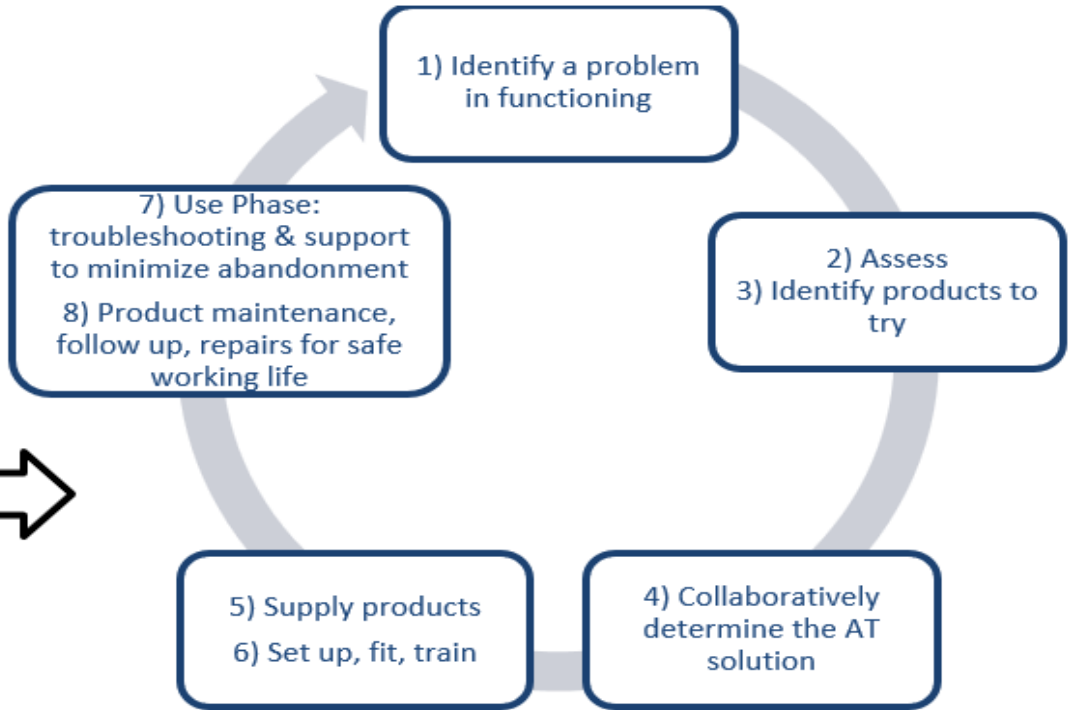
“Square peg, round hole” approach

Health Worker, Bidjigal and Gadigal lands

“The challenge with a lot of what we do – whether that be communications or access to services, is we ask people to not be Indigenous first, and then once they get that, then they can be Indigenous on top of that, and it just doesn’t work like that.”

Health Worker, Turrbal and Jagera lands





WHO & UNICEF. Second global consultation for the WHO-UNICEF Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT). GReAT Consultation, 27-8 October 2021, Geneva; [online.WHO](https://online.who.int/great).

LAYTON, N., SPANN, A., KHAN, M., CONTEPOMI, S., HOOGERWERF, E. J., BELL, D. & DE WITTE, L. 2024. Guidelines for assistive technology service provision – A scoping review. *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 1-12.



Step 1) Identify a problem in functioning

Listen and learn, understand the journey

Respectful, open yarns that honour Elders' stories – see their strengths, hear their struggles, find the right support.

Challenge

- Failure to recognise impact of psychosocial stress on function

Opportunity

- Link AT to individual healing processes
- Culturally appropriate reablement stacking
- Facilitate with subsidised transport



Maintaining connection to Country wherever you live



Step 2) Assess

Start from strength, see the whole person

Build on trusted relationships to understand the whole person – needs and aspirations.

Challenge

- Not enough culturally trained Occupational Therapists
- Invasive, reductive process is shame-job

Opportunity

- Credential ACCHO workforce for basic assessments
- Equip Elders with tailored information about what's coming, early



Step 3) Identify products to try

Share stories, share tools

Culturally appropriate information, earlier – plain language, visual aids, demonstrations, community stories.

Challenge

- Subsidy 'exclusions' take away freedom and control
- Knowledge gate-keeping and clinical jargon

Opportunity

- Equip Elders with information about AT options they can own and understand, earlier
- Frame AT as a suggestion not a directive with case studies
- Equip Elders with information early, on policy changes



Step 4) Collaboratively determine the AT solution

Choose the right path together

Walk alongside Elders and their support Mob to choose products that fit their goals and way of life - together

Challenge

- High cost options drain funding and high tech options not always preferred
- Feeling like you have to 'set aside' Indigeneity in conversations about options

Opportunity

- Simpler, affordable product options
- Equip Elders with consolidated, tailored information to explain options and help prioritise
- Ask more questions to understand what is valued and wraps around a 'task'



Step 5) Supply products

Navigate the way

Value community innovation and resourcefulness

Challenge

- Lack of product stock
- Products arriving late, in separate deliveries without easy instruction

Opportunity

- Pool donated items
- Easier sign off to recycle AT
- Stream-line deliveries



Step 6) Set up, fit, train

Shape support our way in our space

Hands on support tailored to individual and homes

Challenge

- Assistive products that require technical knowledge to install
- Unreliable housing infrastructure
- Worry that AT disrupts the home

Opportunity

- Simpler product options with on-demand installation training
- Bundle assistive products with wrap-around infrastructure support
- Honour relational roles not just physical tasks and include entire household in training



Step 7) Use phase

Keep walking together

Check in often and adjust support

Challenge

- Lack of product transportability
- Perceived stigma impacting confidence

Opportunity

- Tools that travel well with storage advice
- Ongoing outreach
- Anti-stigma efforts



Abandonment

Mobility and social stigma at root of abandonment

Perceived social stigma

- Feeling judged or vulnerable in households and public spaces
- Losing roles as carers or decision makers
- Being treated as fragile or sick by young ones
- Fearing that tools would make their house feel clinical or unwelcoming

What's possible with AT

Family

- Continued fulfilment of caregiving obligations
- More quality, stress-free time with kin
- Protects sacred roles – parent, teacher, tradition-keeper

Out in community

- Role-models courage and self-resilience
- Teaches young ones to be more respectful and supportive
- Emboldens hope to thrive, not just 'get by' in older age

Step 8) Product maintenance

Care as a community, keep the journey safe

Community conversations, not just individual ones

Challenge

- ▶ Assistive products quickly wear out
- ▶ Resource-sharing
- ▶ May discard products if owned by someone who has passed

Opportunity

- ▶ Household and community reablement education campaigns
- ▶ Local maintenance support



Yarning together: a culturally responsive approach to AT for First Nations communities

1. Identify a problem: **Listen and learn, understand the journey**
2. Assess: **Start from strength, see the whole**
3. Identify products to try: **Share stories, share tools**
4. Collaboratively determine the AT solution: **Choose the right path together**
5. Supply products: **Navigate the way**
6. Set up, fit, train: **Shape support, our way, in our space**
7. Use phase: **Keep walking together**
8. Maintenance: **Care as a community, keep the journey safe**

Areas for progress

- AT use for psycho-social gain
- ACCHO credentialling
- Supply and delivery
- Infrastructure support
- Maintenance support
- Getting entire households on board
- Tailored AT information, earlier



Building the evidence-base

- Presented to government
- Published **Community Listening Report** and **Better Practice Guide** on ilaustralia.org.au > sector support)
- Under peer review with the Australian Journal of Social Issues
- Exploring opportunities to further recommendations and return benefits

Enabling strategies for AT skills transfer to local ACCHO workforce

- Layton N, O'Connor J, Fitzpatrick A, et al. (2022) Towards Co-Design in Delivering Assistive Technology Interventions: **Reconsidering Roles for Consumers, Allied Health Practitioners, and the Support Workforce.** *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19(21): 14408.
- **WHO online Training in assistive products (TAP)** supports primary health care and community level personnel to expand scope of practice



Translated resource

Making Choices, Finding Solutions



Simple tips and tricks from
Occupational Therapists on AT & HM

Translated versions

- ◆ Arabic
- ◆ Chinese (Simplified and Traditional)
- ◆ Croatian
- ◆ German
- ◆ Greek
- ◆ Italian
- ◆ Macedonian
- ◆ Modern Tiwi
- ◆ Noongar
- ◆ Pitjantjatjara
- ◆ Plain English
- ◆ Spanish
- ◆ Yumplatok
- ◆ Vietnamese



Free resources



**LiveUp Better Practice Guide
for Culturally Safe information
about assistive products**

liveup.org.au

Powered by
 iLA



Tailored resource



**little
ROCKET**



Informed decision-making

live up
Everyday tools buying guide

This leaflet will help you find the tools you need*
You can purchase these tools from local stores or online.

Tick the tool you are interested in purchasing. Use it to guide your search, or take it to a loved one or local healthcare provider for their support.

Kitchen tools	Cost	Selection	Living area tools	Cost	Selection
Electric can opener	\$30 - \$50	<input type="checkbox"/>	Furniture risers	\$20 - \$50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Two-handed mug	\$20 - \$40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plug pull	\$25 - \$35	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tablet and book stand	\$20 - \$40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Soft pen and pencil grips	\$5 - \$20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scraper and chopper	\$10 - \$30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Night light	\$15 - \$30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kettle tipper	\$70 - \$180	<input type="checkbox"/>	Easy grip scissors	\$15 - \$30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anti-fatigue mat	\$30 - \$70	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pre-threaded needles	Less than \$5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Built-up cutlery	\$20 - \$50	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Bedroom tools	Cost	Selection	Outdoor tools
Portable lap table	\$20 - \$40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Car handybar
Glow touch table lamp	\$15 - \$70	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seatbelt reacher
Back rest pillow	\$50 - \$90	<input type="checkbox"/>	Key turner (3 pack)
Button hook and zip puller	\$15 - \$40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Portable trolley
Long-handled shoehorn	\$15 - \$30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Easy grip gardening tools
Stretch shoelaces	\$10 - \$20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Foldable seat and kneeler
Long-handled hair comb and brush	\$30 - \$40	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Bedroom



Long-handled hair comb and brush

Find out more at liveup.org.au or call for free on 1800 951 671.

*LiveUp is powered by a not-for-profit, so does not make any money from these products.

1080 x 1080



What makes you feel strong and connected? **live up**

Get your copy of LiveUp's Everyday tools to help Mob Guide to help make everyday tasks easier.

These simple tools could be a helping hand to do the things you need or love to do. There are different tools that can be used in the kitchen, bedroom, living area, and outdoors.

Share this guide with your community to keep your spirit strong as you age.



Find out more at liveup.org.au or call for free on 1800 951 671.



live up

Everyone's life journey looks different and how we do things will change over time

liveup.org.au

Find out more at liveup.org.au or call for free on 1800 951 671.



Scan the QR code to download your copy of the guide.





‘Walking Hand In Hand’

Matty Atkinson
(Bangerang/Wiradjuri)
For iLA 2025

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Available
online as a
free mindful
colouring
sheet





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Complete the [webinar feedback form](#) to receive a certificate of attendance.



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DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



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