

## Self-employment , Self-determination and Self-reliance

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To explore the relationship of  
 Self-employment and Quality of Life

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## Overview

- Self-employment in Australia
- A Quality of Life Focus
- Methodology
  - Quality of Life & Checklists
- Self-determination & Self-reliance
- Three Stories
- Conclusions

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## Self-employment in Australia

- Almost 2 million people are self-employed
- Watters & Parmenter (1998) found 6 people with disabilities were self-employed
- Of FaCS users surveyed in 1998, 101 were self-employed. Of those, 2 received the DSP (Saunders et al, 2003)
- 10 Years on from Watters & Parmenter study and little has changed

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## Self-employment in Australia

- Self-employment is a legitimately funded option listed in the Disability Service Standards
- Yet few people with disabilities are taking up self-employment

*My intention was to investigate self-employment for people with disabilities and to look at their challenges and QoL*

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## Methodology

- The Participants
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
  - Quality of Life & development of Checklists
- Case Studies

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## The participants

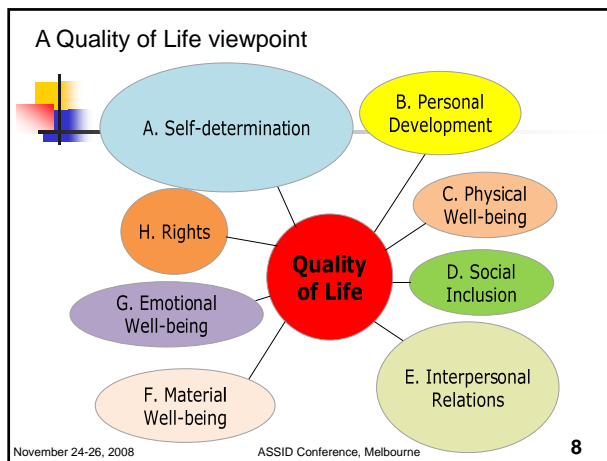
People with disabilities	No identified disabilities
<b>Sole traders</b> Fishing rods (Peter) (rural) Herbs/flowers (Jessica) Artist (Paul) Potter/apiarist (David) (rural) <b>Shareholders (rural)</b> Plant Nursery (John & Elizabeth) Plant Nursery & odd jobs, (Matthew)	<b>Sole Traders</b> Maintenance (Keith) Psychologist (Melanie) Carpentry & Joinery (Robert) Driving instructor (Teresa) Family Day Care (Annette) Retail Plant Nursery, (rural) (Sam) Retail Plant Nursery (Patrick)
<b>Partnership (rural)</b> Mobile work crew (Justine & Kathleen)	<b>Partnership</b> Retail Plant Nursery (Miles)

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### Methodology - Data collection

- Semi-structured interviews, observations, other background information
- Blended method – largely Qualitative
  - “Qualitative approach seeks to capture what people’s lives, experiences and interactions mean to them in their own terms and in their natural settings” (Patton, 1986)
- Phenomenological approach – focus on person’s experiences

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### Some indicators of QoL

(Schalock & Verdugo, 2002, pp 184-187)

QoL Domains	Some Indicators
Interpersonal relations	Interactions -social networks; relationships; peers; Supports
Social inclusion	Community participation/involvement; Community roles; Social supports
Personal Development	Education ; Competencies (cognitive, social, practical); Performance (achievement, productivity); Knowledge; Training
Physical well-being	Health, Activities of daily living, eating, mobility, dressing; Physical fitness; Mobility; Personal safety; Leisure
Self-determination	Personal control; Choice; opportunities; Empowerment; Motivation; Autonomy; Independence
Material well-being	Financial Security & Credit Rating; Income; Housing; Possessions; Neighbourhood; Transport; Employment
Emotional well-being	Self-esteem; Confidence; Self-worth; Self-image; Mental Health/stress; Fulfilment; Sexuality; Faith/Belief; Satisfaction
Rights	Respect; dignity/status

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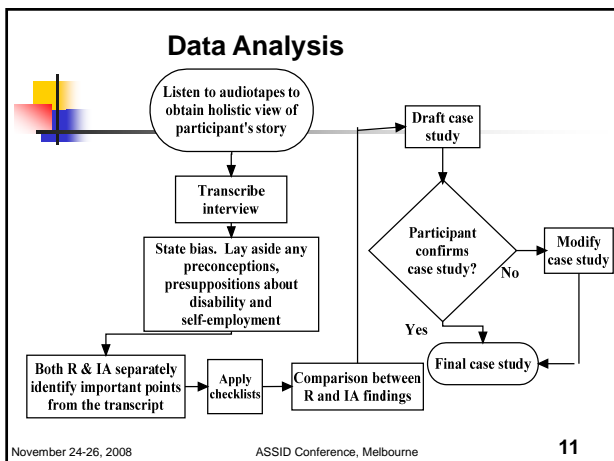
### Methodology – Data Analysis

- Researcher and Independent Analysts:
  - Assess transcripts for participants’ experiences and views
  - Apply Checklist 1
  - Apply Checklist 2
- Researcher:
  - Compares R & IA findings
  - Develops Case Studies
- Participants:
  - Confirm Case Studies

**Checklist 1**  
 •QoL core domains & indicators

**Checklist 2**  
 •Related issues:  
 family, school, exploitation, challenges & barriers

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### Checklists

#### 1. Indicators of QoL ; 2. Related issues

QoL Domains	Indicators (for example)	Found in transcript	Evidence - Refer to
Self-determination	Personal control, choice opportunities, options, preferences	Related issues impacting on QoL	Found in transcript Yes/No
	Empowerment		Evidence Refer to section, line no
	Motivation		Early childhood experiences, negative, positive
	Autonomy		Parental influence
Material well-being	Financial Security & Credit Rating, Income	Challenges (in life/work)	
	Housing	Barriers (in life/work)	
		Any other issues	
	Employment, work status, advancement opportunities		

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INTERVIEW WITH MATTHEW, P Plant Nursery, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2001, 2pm  
 Ruth: We're going to talk about P Plant Nursery, Matthew works at P Plant Nursery, and I'm here sitting in the caravan, if I have any shade houses. Where you involved?  
 Matthew: No. They were here.  
 Ruth: They were here when you came?  
 Matthew: Yes.  
 Ruth: O.K. So, I wanted to talk to you about how you got involved in P Plant Nursery. So, what you've been doing in your life, where you went to school in P P...  
 Matthew: Yes, I went to school in B... first, and then to Special school in H... from there to P P...  
 Ruth: And that, try to get a job and that.  
 Matthew: I did farm work, then workshop, and I went to P Plant Nursery?  
 Ruth: And you were on a farm at one time too, was that?  
 Matthew: Yes.  
 Ruth: So, when you were on the farm, were you at P Plant Nursery?  
 Matthew: Yes.  
 Ruth: O.K. So that was a while back, now.  
 Matthew: Yes.  
 Ruth: And, so, what kinds of things did you like to do at school, what did you like best?  
 Matthew: Maths, and that.  
 Ruth: Did you? You liked maths? And, did you like to work around tank...  
 Matthew: Yes.

Section A  
**IMA8-15**  
 Section B

Ruth: O. K. So, I wanted to talk to you about how you got involved in the P Plant Nursery. So, what you've been doing in your life, where you went to school and stuff. So, did you go to school in P P ?  
 Matthew: Yes, I went to school in B... (country town) first, and then when I left there, I went to special school in H.... (country town) , from there to P P....from P P...to work around tank... and that, try to get a job and that.

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## Data Analysis – Case Studies

- Contains quotes from interviews (participants own perceptions)
- Uses background information from people who helped in establishing businesses
- Researcher uses data to build an holistic picture of what is happening in people's lives (Creswell, 1998)
- Verified by participants

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## Self-determination & Self-reliance

Self-determination  
 Autonomy/personal control (independence);  
 Goals & personal values (beliefs, interests, hopes); Choices (opportunities)


Self-reliance  
 A person's independence & degree of self-reliance varies depending on their abilities and capacities

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## Three stories



**Peter – Sole trader, Fishing rods**




**Jessica – Sole Trader, Herbs & Flowers**



**Miles – Partnership Retail Plant Nursery**

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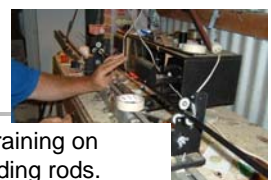
## Peter-sole trader Fishing rods



- .....is aged in his thirties, and has a home in a seaside town; as a boy he was taught by his father to make fishing rods.
- He worked in a business service, and as a farmhand, but was exploited. So he decided 6 years ago to make 'rods' his business.
- He sought help at CRS and was referred to an employment agency. He developed a Business Plan, and obtained an ABN.

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## Peter




- ..... obtained additional training on making patterns and building rods.
- He also hired a computer and tried new designs; constructed machinery, and slowly built up a customer base.
- An agency staff-member went beyond his brief to support Peter with ideas and other advice.

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### Peter

#### Barriers




- *Financial vulnerability* is an issue. He couldn't get a bank loan, or afford financial advice, adding to his difficulties in managing accounts.
- Peter is a *poor judge of people* & was taken advantage of in attempting to buy a van. He almost lost his house by acting as a guarantor for a relative, the legal tangle being solved by his mentor.
- *Health problems* mean 'down' time for Peter; Centrelink's demands for medical reviews increases that down time.
- Peter has an *intellectual disability* & health issues

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### Peter

#### QoL Outcomes



- Motivated to learn new skills (**Personal development**)
- Increased earnings & credit worthiness (**Material well-being**)
- Gained the respect of the community, community presence & participation (**Rights & Social inclusion**)
- Increased self esteem, confidence (**Emotional well-being**)

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### Peter

#### Self-determination

- Chose to be self-employed and structured his own business
- Maintained his fishing rod business even when case-based funding ceased
- Manages advertising in local shops
- Largely self-reliant

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### Jessica – Sole trader


#### Herbs & Flowers



- ... aged in her early thirties, and lives in her own home, with 1:1 support (day support & home support).
- Jessica was in a special class at school due to her intellectual disability, autism & cerebral palsy.
- She then attended a community access program for 5 years; where she was labelled as having "challenging behaviours".
- Her communication is non-verbal, but her behaviour was seen as communicating her dissatisfaction with the program. In response her family & agency 'crafted' an innovative support program with Jessica as the focus of day activity.

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### Jessica



- The family are keen gardeners, and she showed some interest in that area.
- She now grows herbs & flowers, to supply local businesses & cafes and works 5 ½ hours a day.
- Although needing assistance with delicate jobs, Jessica cuts, washes, and shakes herbs & flowers, then places them in water containers to keep them fresh
- She also discards damaged plants for composting.

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### Jessica

#### Barriers to Business Success




- Physical Difficulties, e.g. in carrying basket
- Small production
- Low income
- Health issues
- High support needs

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## Jessica

### QoL Outcomes



- **Personal development.** Jessica has grown physically, emotionally, socially. She now focuses on tasks & maintains them
- **Social inclusion.** When delivering her produce, she is praised by shopkeepers for her work. She fits business in with leisure activities
- **Respect/status.** Jessica is seen as a 'trailblazer', educating the community

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## Jessica

### Self-determination

- **Choices.** Improved decision-making & 'speaking up'. The business choice has been validated through observation of her motivation to work
- **Autonomy.** She knows it's her business
- **Motivation** to work - she knows the \$ go towards a holiday
- **Independence.** She is living & working more independently .

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## Miles (no identified disabilities)

### Partnership – Retail Plant Nursery




- ...aged late thirties and lives in his own home.
- He had some experience in his uncle's wholesale plant business, and had learnt management skills in a retail store
- Miles obtained a start-up loan of \$5000; but relied on his wife's income for some years while building the business.
- He started selling plants from a van outside a shopping centre, but as income improved, he bought block of land to set up a business venue.

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## Miles

### Barriers

- Cash flow and Credit difficulties
- Initial difficulty in establishing venue
- Needed to work long hours for 10 years to consolidate the business



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## Miles

### QoL Outcomes

- **Material well-being**
  - Established financial security; store ownership and franchises
- **Personal development**
  - Has acquired management skills
- **Self-determination**
  - **Motivated** to start a business
  - **Made Choices** concerning business needs
  - **Self-reliant**, but needed support initially

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## Conclusions

- QoL Outcomes
- Challenges for people with disabilities
- Implications for agencies
- Challenge for the Future

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## QoL Outcomes

- **Emotional well-being**
  - Increased self-esteem, confidence
- **Personal Development** learning new skills
- **Respect/status** as business established
- **Self-determination**
  - Self-employment provided the opportunity to be self-determining
  - Improved decision-making and control over work hours and jobs
- **Self-reliance**
  - All participants needed some support

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## Challenges for people with disabilities

- Maintaining agency support & funding
- Obtaining access to finance & managing finances generally
- Overcoming Health issues
- Developing community networks
- Expanding businesses beyond the 'hobby' stage
  - 3 out of 4 sole traders taking part, remain at 'hobby' stage

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## The Implication for agencies

Agencies who support people with disabilities need to encourage self-determination, regardless of their perception of their clients' abilities & competencies

By providing :

- individualised support with the person as the focus
- opportunities for choice and education around those choices
- a 'mentor', from the agency, the community or the person's family

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## The Challenge for the Future

- Self-employment provides a person with the opportunity for growth through decision-making, self-determination and valued status in the community.
- Carefully designed support is essential, regardless of perceived independence & self-reliance
- The challenge is, in partnership with the person with the disability, to foster activities which provide opportunities for self-determination

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## Thank You



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