

Research Plan **2013 - 2015**

Building on strong foundations

***making it
happen***

External: Commercial-in-Confidence
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Contents

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| | |
|--|---------|
| Research Plan Achievements 2009 – 2012 | Page 3 |
| Research Plan 2013 – 2015 | Page 10 |
| Research Plan Objectives | Page 19 |

Research Plan Achievements **2008-2011**

Scope Research Plan 2013 - 2015

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Outcomes of Scope's First Research Plan 2008 - 2011

Priority 1 Establishing an extensive research program

- 5 major research programs, consisting of...
- 23 research projects of national and/or international significance

Priority 2 Providing effective research support, capacity building and planning

- 14 Client Services staff supported to undertake or lead research projects
- 4 staff undertaking undergraduate or Masters level study related to their research at Scope
- 4 staff undertaking PhD's related to their research at Scope
- Scope Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed 60 research proposals
- 19 publications, 10 book chapters, 18 articles in peer-reviewed journals
- 35 international refereed conference presentations, 34 national refereed conference presentations, 41 non-refereed conference presentations

Priority 3 Partnerships and collaboration

- Joint adjunct positions with Deakin University
- Teaching positions at La Trobe University
- Research partnerships with Deakin University and La Trobe University
- 8 multi-partner research projects
- Membership of Department of Human Services Disability Research Reference Panel
- Key resource for Cerebral Palsy Australia Research Working Group
- 20 research projects by external researchers involving Scope clients and/or staff

Priority 4 Gaining funds and support

- Over \$2 million external funding secured to undertake research

Scope's Research Program

Scope has established an extensive research program involving research of international significance.

The key elements of this program are listed below:

1) Research that supports the inclusion of people with little or no speech

Scope works with many people who, because of their disability, have little or no speech. This may be due to their disability making it physically difficult for them to speak, or because they have profound intellectual disability. The research Scope undertakes in this area focuses on improving inclusion for people with little or no speech.

Key project areas include:

Supported Decision Making

The key project in this area, *Listening to Those Seldom Heard*, is an internationally significant project exploring how to better support people with profound intellectual disability to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

Mental Health

The key project in this area is *The Bridging Project*, in partnership with Monash University's Centre for Development Disability Health. This is a long-term project aiming to achieve effective identification and management of mental health issues for people with little or no speech in mainstream health services.

Scope's Research Program – cnt'd

2) Research on Reducing Behaviour of Concern

Some people with disabilities who have a cognitive impairment can also have behaviour of concern, sometimes referred to as challenging behaviour. This is behaviour of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is placed in serious jeopardy or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to the use of ordinary community facilities. One thing that can cause these behaviours is difficulty communicating. Managing and minimizing this behaviour can involve restrictions on the person. One way to reduce these restrictions (called restrictive practices) is to support better communication with and by the person with the behaviour of concern.

Scope's research program focuses on laying the foundations for effective communication for people with behaviours of concern who are subject to restrictive practices.

3) Research that helps us deliver better outcomes for people with a disability

The Outcomes Project

This program has four active projects which focus on measuring the impact and outcomes of services and supports provided to people with a disability, and developing new client-focused tools to measure those impacts and outcomes. Three of these projects will enable Scope to evaluate the extent to which outcomes important to clients have been achieved in early childhood intervention services, therapy services and individualised adult services.

Inclusion and Community Building

This program includes a wide range of projects, all of which explore what helps and hinders participation in the life of the community by people with a disability, with a view to identifying more effective strategies for service providers and policy makers to foster genuine inclusion. Examples include: the *Inclusive Shopping Centre* project undertaken in partnership with Westfield Plenty Valley and Whittlesea Council and *Inclusion: Making It Happen*, which was cited as best practice in the Productivity Commission's report into Disability Care and Support.

Scope's Research Program – cnt'd

4) Shaping Government Policy

Because of our deep knowledge of the lived experience of people with disability and their families Scope is well positioned to undertake research that can help governments make better policy decisions. Scope research has been used by policy makers to:

- Recommend changes to the Victorian Guardianship Act
- Highlight best practice in the inclusion of people with disability
- Inform the Victorian State Disability Plan.

While a number of research reports are used to influence government policy, the most ambitious project being undertaken by Scope to-date is *The 1 in 4 Poll*, a national survey on the issues of importance to people with a disability and their families, in partnership with Deakin University. This is a regular poll, the results of which will be used to influence government policy at a state and national level.

5) Safer and Healthier Lives

Scope undertakes research that addresses unmet health needs for people with little or no speech. Two key projects in this research program are:

Collaboration in Pain Identification for People with Little or No Speech

The project is designed to build the capacity of health and disability organisations to more effectively identify and respond to pain in people who have little or no speech. The target group is people who experience severe communication difficulties in association with developmental disabilities such as intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, and autism, and with acquired disabilities, such as traumatic brain injury, stroke and dementia.

Best Practice in Dysphagia

This project focuses on developing best practice benchmarks in the treatment of people with swallowing and eating difficulties (dysphagia). Dysphagia is a leading cause of early death for people with cerebral palsy.

Research Governance

Scope assures the quality of its research program through:

Operating a Human Research Ethics Committee that:

- Is registered with the National Health and Medical Research Council
- Complies with the National Statement on the Ethical Conduct in Human Research
- Has reviewed over 60 research proposals

The roles of Head of Research and Research Coordinator, who:

- Build research capacity
- Ensure research is well designed and well managed
- Secure funding for research projects
- Ensure the organisation has access to experienced researchers
- Engage with potential academic and sector partners
- Engage with governments to enable uptake of research findings into policy
- Engage with Scope and sector service representatives to support uptake of research findings into practice

Using Evidence Based Practice

- Scope's Therapy and Psychology Services have established a Practice Support Team that supports the use of evidence based practice within those services. This ensures staff have access to current trends in best-practice service delivery by drawing on research, practitioner knowledge and customer expectations.

Our Supporters and Partners

Scope's success in research has been possible thanks to the generous contributions of supporters and the highly collaborative partnerships we have with a number of organisations. We are privileged to have the following supporters and partners:

Research Supporters

ANZ Trustees
Ms Barbara Haynes
The Bett Trust
The City of Whitehorse
Department of Human Services
Department of Education & Early Childhood
Development
Eldon & Anne Foote Trust
The Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
The Gandel Charitable Trust
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
Legal Services Board Victoria
Myer Foundation
Reichstein Foundation
The Trust Company
William Angliss Foundation
William Buckland Foundation

Research Partners

Aids and Equipment Action Alliance
Catholic Education Commission of Victoria
Cerebral Palsy Australia
Deakin University
La Trobe University
Monash University
Centre for Developmental Disability and Health
Victoria
National Disability Services
RMIT
Royal Children's Hospital
University of Melbourne

Research Plan 2013 - 2015

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Overview

Scope has made a significant investment in building its research capacity over the past 10 years.

Scope's first Research Plan (2008 - 2011) has led to the establishment of an extensive research program that has produced research that is demonstrably influencing government policy and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Scope's services. Over \$2 million of additional revenue has been sourced to fund Scope's research work.

As part of its current strategic planning processes Scope has identified Research and Innovation as one of its foundation strategic priorities for the 2013-2015 Strategic Plan.

This Research Plan positions Scope to build on the strong foundations of its first Research Plan.

Scope's Research Program will be maintained and expanded to embrace opportunities presented by emerging technologies.

The creation of an organisation-wide culture that embraces the use of robust evidence is emphasised as a way to position Scope for an evidence-focused life under an NDIS.

The Plan also positions Scope's research work to be a strong contributor to Scope's financial sustainability through:

- Providing evidence that improves the effectiveness and/or efficiency of Scope services
- Robustly evaluating innovative services and products to confirm their effectiveness and to support implementation
- Helping to build a strong brand that distinguishes Scope from its competitors through evidencing the quality of our services and products

Strategic Policy Context

NDIS

The NDIS is currently being rolled out. The Productivity Commission has recommended that:

The Australian Government should establish a national independent research capacity in the early stages of the implementation of the NDIS. The NDIA [National Disability Insurance Agency] should determine how research is undertaken and the research agenda, following public consultation.

Insurance schemes have historically been strongly evidence-based, driven in part by the need to ensure cost effectiveness and contain expenditure in the long term. With implementation of the NDIS research will become a critical tool for validating current and new services. Organisations with established research capability have a competitive advantage because they are well placed to use research to provide evidence to customers and to the NDIA about the effectiveness and efficacy of their support services.

National Disability Agreement

COAG has agreed to provide funding for research through the National Disability Agreement. Over \$10 million has been earmarked to support disability-focused research. This funding gives preference to research that is done in partnership between universities, service providers and people with a disability.

National Disability Strategy

The National Disability Strategy obliges the Commonwealth and States to:

Develop a national research agenda on disability issues to inform research priorities across both mainstream and disability-specific areas

Why Should Scope do Research?

There are a number of reasons for Scope to play a role as a research organisation, rather than just being a consumer of research:

World Leading Research Program: Scope is already undertaking unique research that is at the forefront of international efforts to create a better life for people with a disability: for people with little or no speech, for people with intellectual disability and for people with physical disability.

Legitimacy: Our role as a service provider places us close to people with a disability and their day-to-day lives. We can do research that universities cannot do alone.

Influence: Our size and credible brand give us capacity to influence government policy.

Capability: Scope is one of a small number of Australian disability organisations that has a mature, well-governed research program.

Customer Credibility: Under an NDIS there will be an increasing reliance on research to highlight which services and organisations are able to deliver the outcomes their customers seek. Organisations that can demonstrate that their services are effective and efficient will be better able to make their case to potential customers.

Trusted Partner: Scope's capacity to do research that highlights policy gaps and to test innovations and policy solutions makes it a trusted partner to government and to authorities such as an NDIA. We can make compelling cases for new and increased funding.

Service Efficacy: Scope's research program ensures we deliver evidence-based services that deliver measurable outcomes.

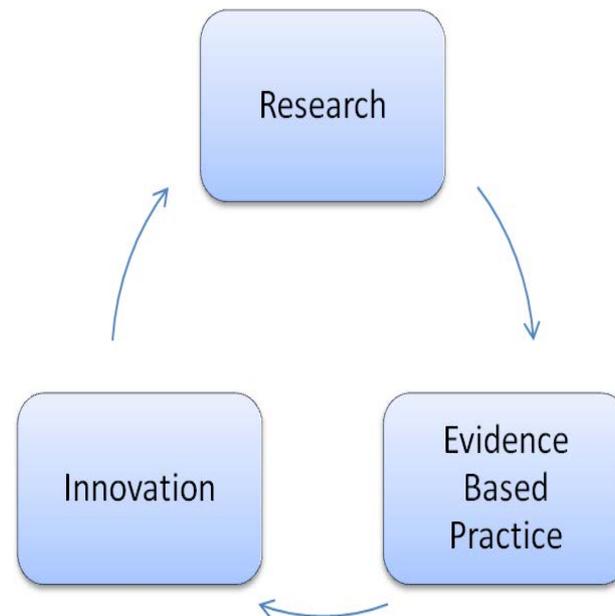
Scope Research Framework

The Scope research framework considers *research* alongside the related activities of *evidence based practice* and *innovation*.

Research is defined as the systematic examination of a topic to generate new understandings. It provides the broad base of knowledge necessary for the solution of recognised practical problems (Deakin University, 2012).

Evidence based practice entails using evidence to make decisions about how to provide services. This evidence is an integration of the most relevant research, the expertise held by an organisation's people, and the values and preferences of service users (American Psychological Association, 2006).

Innovation is defined as the introduction of new or significantly improved services, products, processes, forms of organization, and markets, as well as the development of new skills and human capital (UNESCO, 2009).



Research: Goal for 2015

Our goal for Scope's research in 2015 is that:

Scope staff are committed to, and skilled in, the robust use of evidence to support us to make a compelling case to customers and to Government.

The research program is strongly connected to Scope's practice, both informing and informed by what is happening in our services. The findings of our research are adopted by other service providers and by policy makers in Victoria and across Australia.

Scope's research is frequently conducted in partnership with people with disabilities, service providers, universities and policy makers. These partnerships are robust and deep, creating mutual benefit for Scope and its partners.

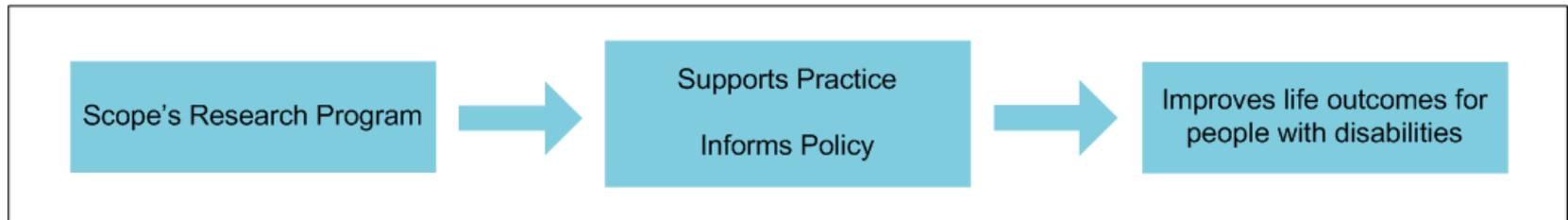
Scope's research program is cited as best practice for a disability organisation by service providers, academics and policy makers. It is nationally connected and internationally recognised.

Scope's research work is financially self-sustaining.

Scope's Research Direction

The overall purpose of Scope's research is:

To improve life outcomes for people with disabilities and their carers through supporting practice and informing policy



Our research:

- Is undertaken in partnership with people we support, their carers and their communities
- Helps us understand the experiences of the people we support and their carers
- Contributes to improved life outcomes for the people we support
- Increases the capacity of the community to be inclusive of people with a range of abilities
- Can readily be applied in services and supports and results in service improvements
- Can assist policy makers to develop more effective policies
- Considers outcomes across a comprehensive range of life areas, including participation, health and wellbeing
- Draws methods such as social-, applied-, and clinical-research approaches
- Considers how research methods can best be adapted to be inclusive of people with a range of abilities
- Achieves high ethical standards in the conduct of research
- Has strong links with universities, research bodies and networks

Focus of Scope's Research

Scope's research focus is informed by listening to our stakeholders and attending to the priority areas identified through the national disability agenda. A clear focus enhances the research profile and reputation of Scope.

Outcomes: research that captures the real world outcomes of Scope's work for people we support, their families and carers, and the communities with whom they engage.

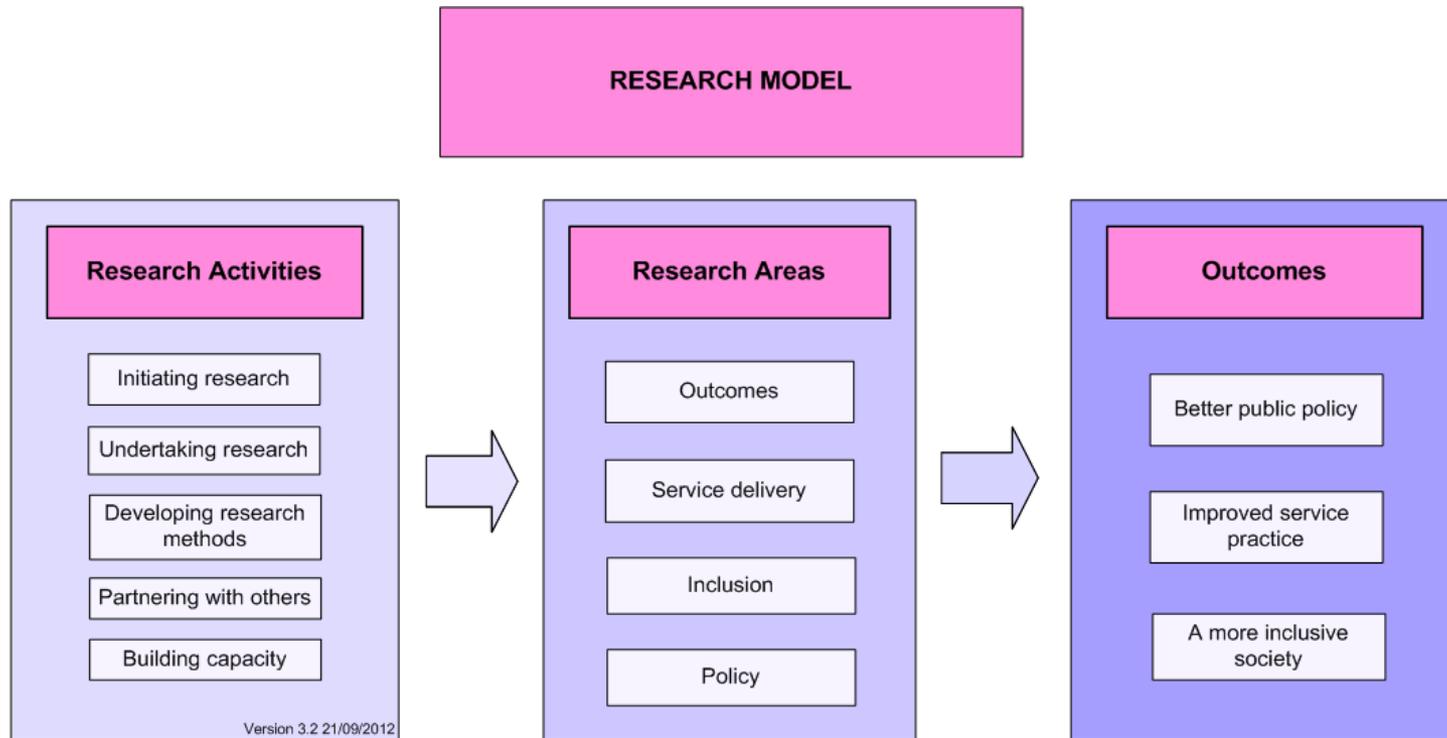
Inclusion: research which focuses on social participation, access to mainstream services and supports, decision making and human rights, and broader systems change.

Service delivery and supports: research that evaluates the impact of services, demonstrates effectiveness, tests innovations, identifies service improvement directions, and allows people who purchase our services to make accurate and informed choices.

Policy: research for influencing and understanding the impact of policy and legislation on people with disability and their communities.



Scope's Research Model



Supporting the Work – the role of the Scope's research team

Building capacity – within Scope
 – across the sector
 Coordinating research in Scope
 Resourcing & supporting research
 Developing & monitoring strategy

Initiating & undertaking research
 Research into practice and policy pathways
 Establishing & managing research partnerships
 Seeking funding & support

Promoting & communicating
 Publishing & disseminating
 Supporting the ethics process

Objective 1: Scope Has an Evidence-Seeking Culture

Scope aims to build a culture where staff have a strong spirit of inquiry, seeking out and using evidence to support their work. We will create an organisation that embraces evidence based practice.

Evidence based practice (EBP) is often thought of as the **integration** of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of client values and preferences.

Research evidence: Evidence which is based on well designed and rigorous research. This includes research that is clinically relevant to the population of focus, often from health, allied-health and the social sciences, and which reports practical implications for person-centred support.

Professional expertise: The expertise that practitioners acquire through their experience, practice and continuing professional development. Practitioners use this knowledge to make proficient judgements about aspects of a person's support appropriate to their circumstances.

Client values and preferences: The unique preferences, culture, concerns and expectations each client or family brings to an encounter and that should be integrated into practice decisions.



Objective 2: People with Disability and Their Families are Integral To Scope's Research Plan

Scope aims to undertake research that honours the voice of people with a disability and their families. This means that we will actively engage with people to ensure our research is relevant to them and is in fact directed by them wherever possible.

We believe best value comes from research that draws on the lived experience of people with a disability, their families and communities and which is embedded in our practice, and supported centrally.

We believe that people with a disability and their families should have as much control as possible in the framing of research, their participation in research and the use of research.

Objective 3: Research is used to Achieve Practical Outcomes for People with Disability

Scope undertakes research that has the maximum benefit for people with disability. We do this by doing research that supports innovation and service improvement, by doing research that supports better government and public policy, and by ensuring research findings are successfully applied.

Research into Practice

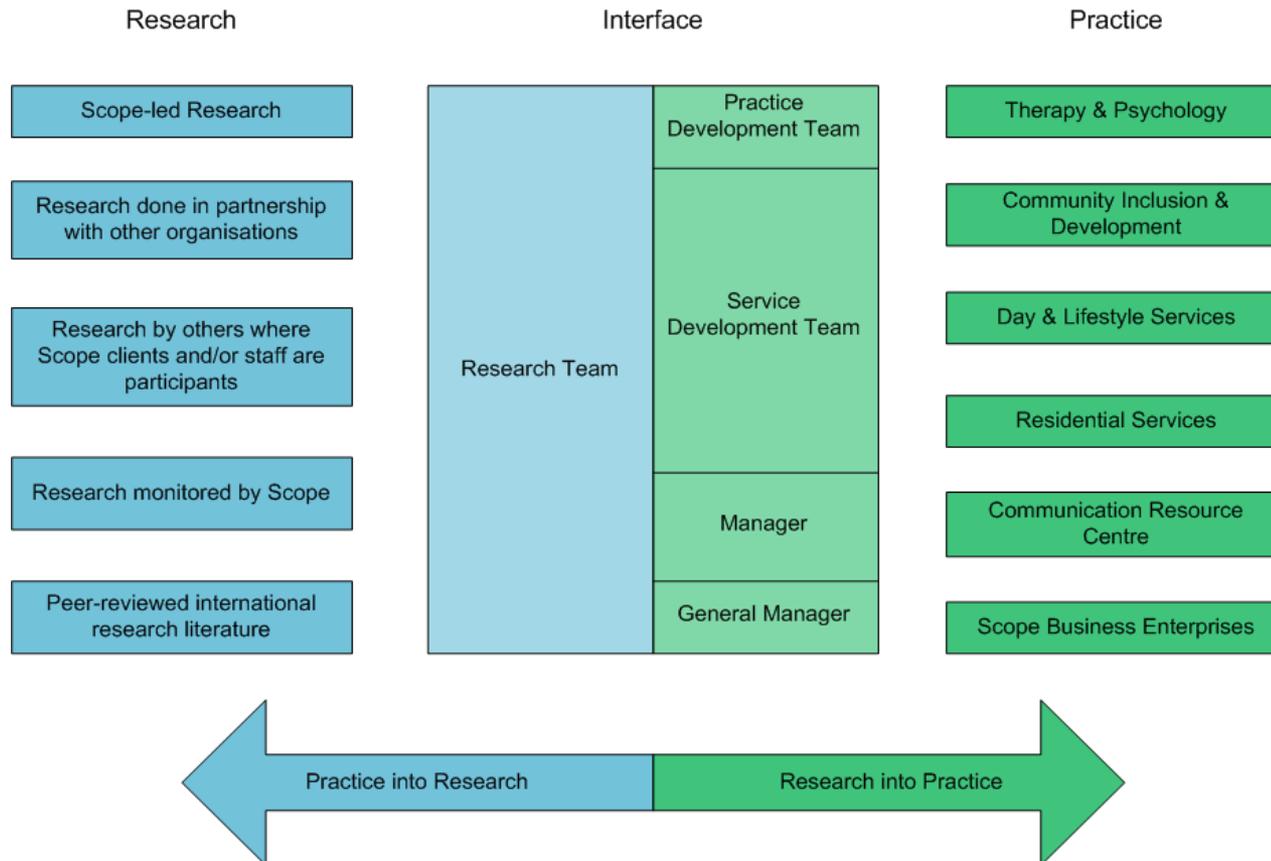
While Scope has a research program with international reach, we also need to make sure we use research in our own services. This allows us to measure the effectiveness of services, to test and validate innovations, to identify improvement opportunities and to confidently promote what we are doing well. In addition, we need robust project management systems in place to ensure the research findings are implemented and evaluated.

Research into Policy

Because of our role as a major Australian disability service provider that offers a wide range of services, we are ideally positioned to undertake research that supports better government and public policy. In a period of dramatic change to Federal and State disability policy, research will play a vital role in shaping policy. Scope's research can play an important role in ensuring that new policies are fit for purpose.

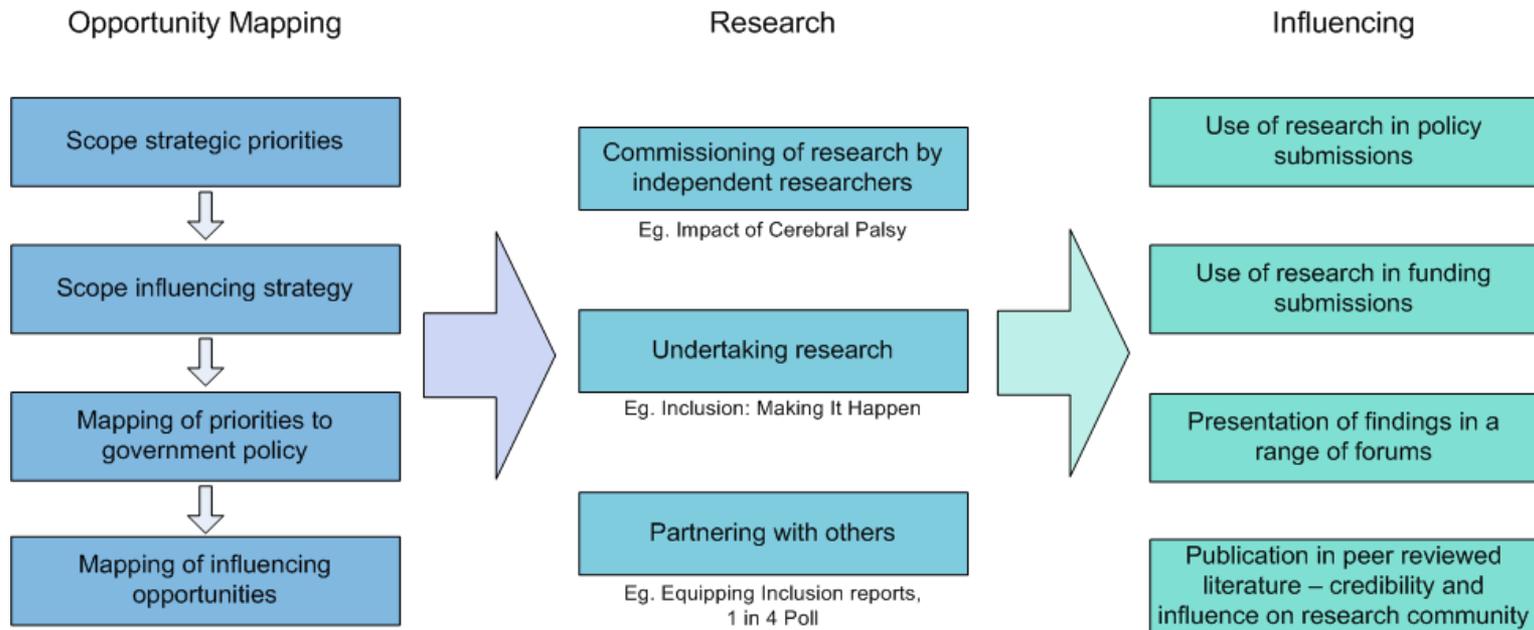
Objective 3: Research is used to Achieve Practical Outcomes for People with Disability

Research into Practice and Practice into Research
 – How Scope Draws on and Improves its Practice



Objective 3: Research is used to Achieve Practical Outcomes for People with Disability

Research that Influences Policy –
How Scope Uses Research to Achieve Positive
Policy Outcomes



Objective 4: Scope Maintains an Internationally Significant Research Program

Scope aims to maintain its current high-profile research program. We will also incorporate research into enabling technologies that support better outcomes for people with a disability and that achieve greater business efficiency for disability service providers.

Scope has a well-established, mature research program that continues to attract funding from governments, from individual donors and from trusts and foundations. The results of these projects are accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals, in book chapters and by international publishers. The results are regularly presented in peer-reviewed international conferences and used by governments to inform policy. A range of tools, guides and resources produced as part of this work are used internationally because they are recognised as best practice. Scope will continue to maintain this research program.

Whether it be through the recent leaps in communication technology, or advances in robotics or the use of technology in architecture, transport and the built environment, new technologies are playing a transformational role in our lives. Scope recognises that such technology represents a significant opportunity to improve life for people with a disability. Yet this area is under-researched. For this reason Scope has committed to expand its research program to include research into enabling technologies. This research will focus on both the use of technology in the day-to-day life of people with a disability as well as the use of technology by service providers to achieve greater business efficiency, which frees up resources for improved service delivery.

Objective 5: Scope Has Long Term Research Partnerships That Create Shared Value

Scope aims to have a number of strong research partnerships with universities, research institutes and community organisations who share our vision for research. These partnerships will add value to both partners and have a strong focus on making life better for people with a disability and their families.

Scope has a number of research partnerships with universities and community organisations. These partnerships have often started out as single project partnerships which have subsequently expanded to include multiple projects, student placements and joint adjunct and teaching appointments. Scope has the opportunity to build on these partnerships, or to create new partnerships, to establish long-term strategic partnerships.

Both government and philanthropic funders strongly encourage partnerships for research with a view to bringing universities and industry together. This is based on the view that the combination of academic rigour and real-world experience leads to research that can be meaningfully applied. Multi-partner projects are viewed favourably, particularly when they involve partners from a range of sectors.

Scope's interest in research goes beyond issues such as disability or health into areas such as architecture, urban development, transport, business, technology and the built environment. We are interested in undertaking research with partners who share this broad vision of the possibilities of research in the lives of people with a disability.

Objective 6: Scope Has Effective Research Support, Capacity Building and Planning

Scope aims to have robust research governance and support systems in place to ensure Scope's research work is of a high standard. Staff involved in research will have the skills, abilities and resources needed to undertake research and to apply what they have learnt to their practice. There will be appropriate central staffing to support Scope's research and excellent systems to facilitate the successful and ethical planning, implementation and uptake of research.

Research can be defined very broadly as “activity that creates useful knowledge”. Across its functions Scope undertakes many activities that meet this definition:

- Ethics-approved social-, clinical- and applied-research
- Market research
- Business research
- Service evaluation
- Quality improvement

In this research plan Scope commits to all such activity meeting high standards. Time will be invested in people and organisational capability to ensure these standards are maintained. However, the strongest governance processes will be applied to ethics approved human research.

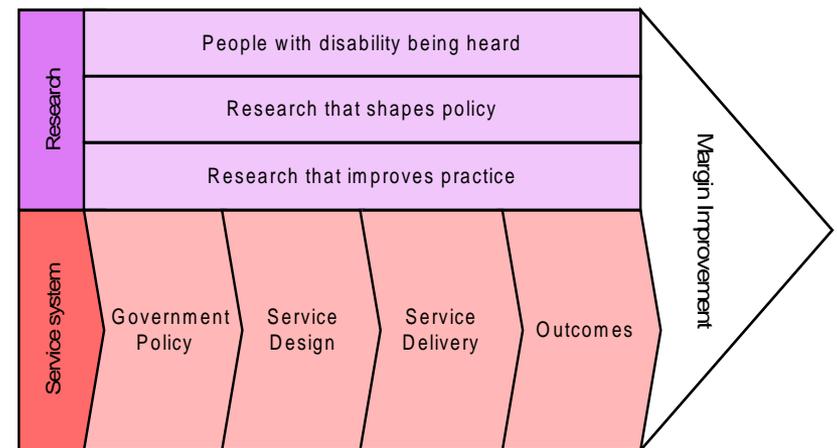
Objective 7: Scope's Research Contributes to Long Term Sustainability

Scope aims for its research work to generate positive returns to the business. Scope's research will be strongly promoted internally and externally to help build the Scope brand with potential funders, customers and current and potential staff.

To-date Scope's research has helped to build a strong organisational brand, generating additional revenue of over \$2 million in the life of the first Research Plan.

The value created by Scope's research program will be leveraged through strongly promoting Scope's research work. Scope's ability to demonstrate how it uses evidence to improve its practice and to be informed of the needs and preferences of service users will be promoted to a range of stakeholders. Potential funders and customers will be reassured that Scope rigorously assesses service efficacy and efficiency and uses research to test innovative services and products.

Current and potential staff will be attracted by the knowledge that Scope services are contemporary and cutting edge, and that they as staff can be involved in developing the evidence-base that underpins those services.



Research Value Chain for Disability Service System