

History of Supported Decision-Making Projects at the Office of the Public Advocate

The Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) has conducted projects to enhance practices, resources, and tools for supporting individuals with impaired decision-making ability and their families. Family and friends are best suited to assist with decision-making, and the Public Advocate should only act as a substitute decision-maker if no other suitable person is willing and available.

The table below summarises past projects.

Date	Type	Title	Funders/Partners	Aim
2010-2012	Project	The Supported decision-making Project (inc. Supported Decision Making Trial)	Julia Farr MS McLeod Benevolent Fund Margaret Wallace and Associates - Independent evaluator	Assist people with a disability to set up supported decision-making agreements to maximise their autonomy to exercise their legal decision-making rights. To study supported decision making when it is offered to people who have had a brain injury, stroke, intellectual disability, or a neurological condition affecting decision making. Trial an approach to Supported Decision Making, in which a person nominates one or more people as a supporter. An extra person “a monitor” helps with the process and identifies problems if they occur.
2017	Project	Implementing Supported Decision Making for Adults with a guardianship order in South Australia	Law Foundation Margaret Brown (UniSA)	To identify opportunities, barriers, and best practice for implementing supported decision making in guardianship in South Australia, and to make recommendations for reform to enable supported decision making for adults with mental incapacity.
2018	Project	The law and policy on decision making by, for and with clients in SA guardianship practice	Law Foundation Margaret Brown (UniSA)	Further research to develop a practice and policy guide in relation to supported decision making for OPA staff as well as other health and legal professionals and identify areas for law reform.
2018	Project	Supported Decision Making for the Lifetime Support Authority	Lifetime Support Authority	To produce a policy and practice framework to implement supported-decision-making principles for Lifetime Support Scheme clients with an acquired brain injury.
2019	Project	Supported Decision Making and My Life Decisions in Department for Human Services (DHS) accommodation	Margaret Brown (UniSA) Disability SA	Implement supported decision-making using the My Life Decisions plan for DHS clients, particularly those under the guardianship of the Public Advocate. This includes training DHS staff on how to use the My Life Decisions plans.