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Social Policy Research Centre

NACBO Research Plan

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Contents

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | NACBO model and logic | 1 |
| 2 | Research approach..... | 5 |
| 3 | Methods | 9 |

1 NACBO model and logic

1.1 Background

The National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO) is a national network of six not-for-profit, values-based organisations. The six independent organisations operate on a mix of fee for service and government funding, in most cases operating for many years. More recently, the six NACBO organisations have received funding by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to continue to build the capacity of people with disability and their informal supporters, to enable fuller social and economic participation of people with disability.

The Alliance and its individual organisations promote people with disability as valued citizens, build competencies and skills of people with disability and their families and supporters through peer groups, networks, leadership development, so that people with disability can reach their full potential and live valued, self-directed and inclusive lives.

The six NACBO organisations are:

- Belonging Matters (Victoria)
- Community Resource Unit (CRU) (Queensland)
- Imagine More (ACT)
- The Institute for Family Advocacy & Leadership Development (NSW)
- JFA Purple Orange (SA)
- Valued Lives Foundation (WA).

NACBO commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre UNSW (SPRC) and Flinders University to undertake a two-year evaluation of the project and its model of change.

1.2 NACBO Capacity Building Model

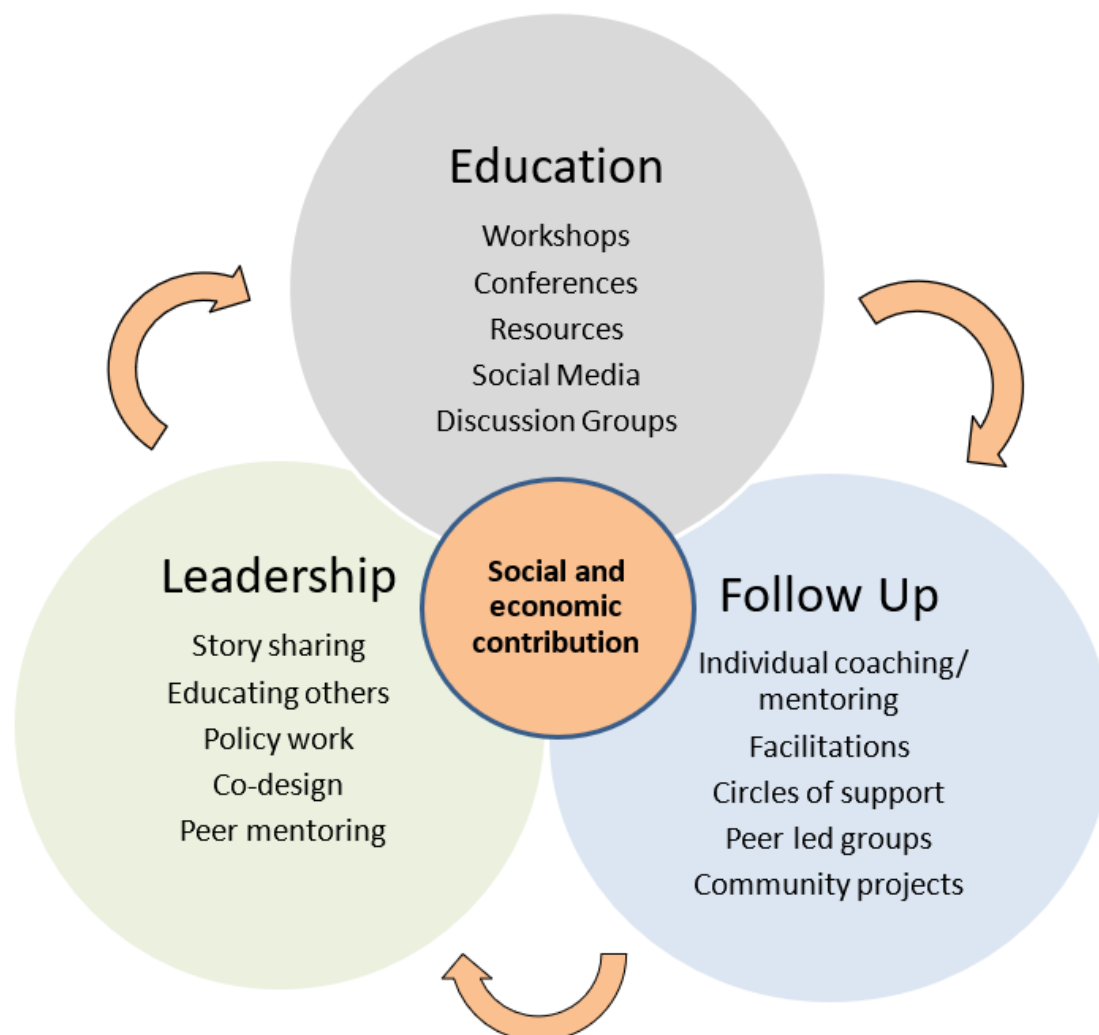
NACBO have developed a capacity building model. The model reflects the policy areas outlined by Australia's National Disability Strategy 2021-2031, promoting the protection of rights of people with disability; inclusive and accessible communities; economic participation and security; personal and community support; learning and skills development and health and wellbeing.

The NACBO capacity building model consists of three central inputs to enable fuller and valued social lives and economic contribution:

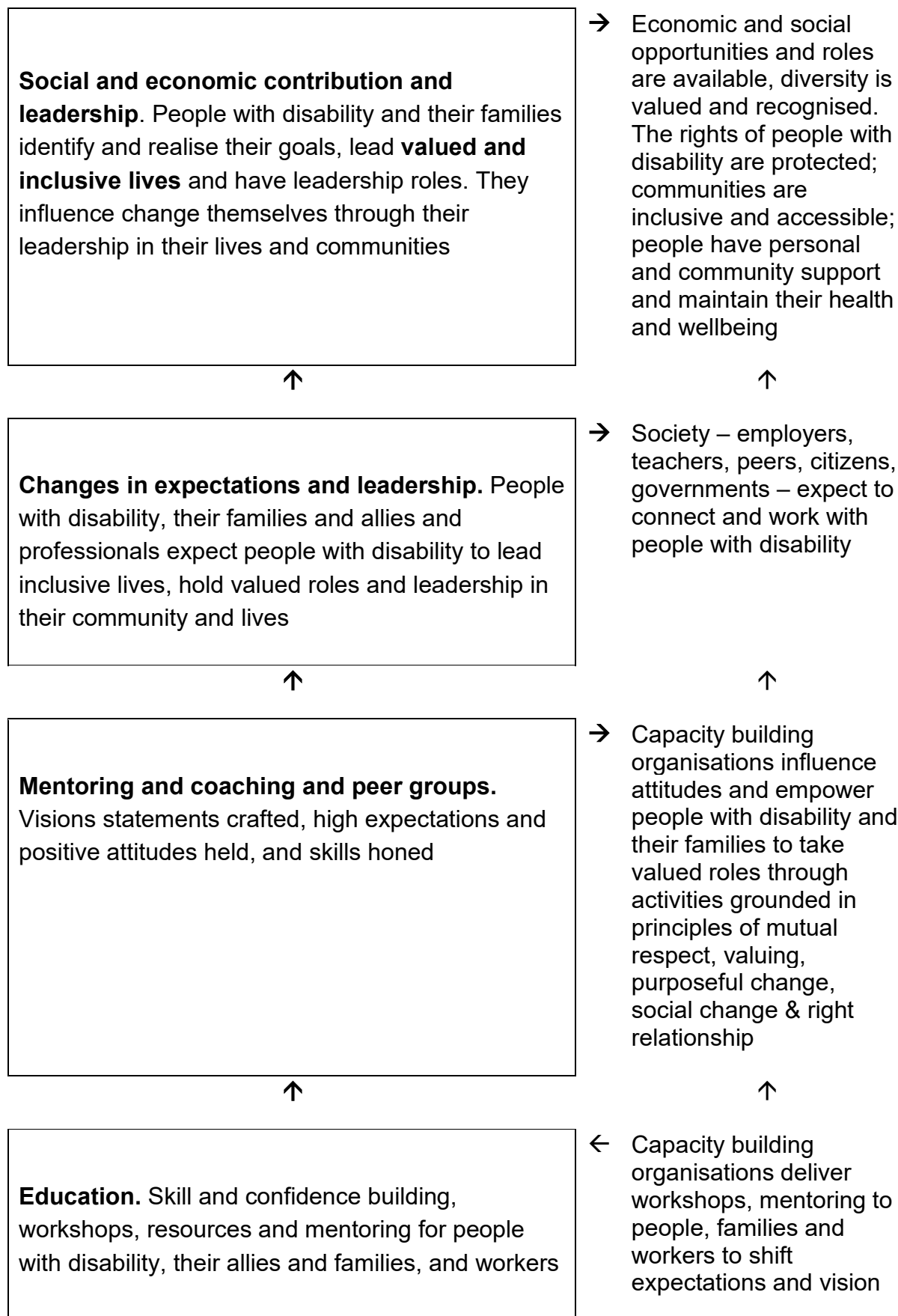
- **Education:** building confidence and skills, changing mindsets and aspirations
- **Support and follow up:** peer led groups, mentoring, individual coaching to build connection and belonging and craft visions for a good and valued life
- **Leadership development:** people with disability, their families and supporters are involved in sharing their stories of change, policy work and visible in all areas and roles of society.

As part of the proposed Evaluation of NACBO, outlined in this plan, we aim to review the model of change and refine it.

Figure 1: NACBO Capacity Building Model



1.3 NACBO project logic



A focus of the research will be to identify the characteristics of the NACBO model that enhances capacity building, leads to inclusive lives as outlined by Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 – from the protection of rights, economic security, to maintaining social connections, health and wellbeing.

NACBO organisations deliver values based capacity building with people and their support networks with the goal of enabling fuller social and economic participation of people with disability. Underpinning this is a commitment to developing opportunity for people with disability and families to influence change themselves through their leadership in their lives and communities. Principles of mutual respect, valuing, purposeful change, social impact and right relationship are important to all NACBO organisations.

This ongoing presence and connection to community and people with disability, their allies and families means that they regularly connect and work with people across different social settings and over the life course. For example, a parent may seek advice or resources regarding their child attending a mainstream school and having the same opportunities as other children. As life progresses a family may want assistance with supporting their child to join or find paid employment or attending university, then move to their own home and connect to their neighbourhood.

The relationships with individuals and families trust and connection, and presence in different local settings, become valuable resources.

As an individual with a disability becomes included in the community, has access to typical pathways and takes up valued roles, this in turn provides opportunities for positive role modelling and perceptions of people with disability in their communities and society. A key strategy of NACBO is to invest in the leadership of people with a disability and families to lead change. This can be done through sharing their story about inclusion, leading a peer group, and taking on valued roles where they contribute socially and economically.

The NACBO approach is that it offers people, their networks and allies, a vision and hope with respect to inclusion, and that individuals and families can trust and turn to capacity building services over the lifespan.

2 Research approach

2.1 Research questions

Impact of NACBO

1. What impact does NACBO have on the lives of people with disability? What changes are people experiencing (are people reaching their potential)? How to the changes contribute to the ADS outcomes
 - a. Learning and skills
 - b. inclusive and accessible communities
 - c. protection of rights
 - d. economic participation and security
 - e. personal and community support/connection
 - f. health and wellbeing
2. Does the project shift (people's and allies, families) mindsets?
3. What outcomes have people with disability, their families and supporters achieved because of being part of NACBO? Which outcomes are not achieved and why?

Effectiveness of Processes

4. What processes are effective in shifting mindsets? (What activities in the NACBO model – peer groups, mentoring, follow up)
5. What processes in the project are effective in building skills, knowledge and capacity of people with disability and their supporters (e.g., activities to develop leadership, rural and remote reach, layering different activities a person can choose from; shorter versus longer term capacity building funding)?
6. What challenges and opportunities emerged in the Alliance (governance structure, leadership, cooperative approach of network of 6 not-for-profit organisations), how can any challenges be resolved?
7. What barriers to building capacity and skills of people with disability and their families remain? How can these be addressed in the future?

Lessons for the future and policy

8. What are the lessons for future projects and the role of capacity building for the 6 policy areas outlined by Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 (Inclusive

communities, protection of rights, Economic participation/security, personal and community support, learning and skills, health and wellbeing)?

9. What are the lessons from the NACBO project for the future and capacity building more broadly?

We will design accessible questions for the participants that will generate data to answer these research questions.

2.2 Developmental evaluation and co-design

The research will take a developmental evaluation approach to inform change during the project, and measure change and impact to meet the project outcomes. It will be used to highlight the changes for people with disability, their family and friends and other stakeholders.

The developmental evaluation will be embedded in a co-design approach to assess the processes and impact of the NACBO projects and the alliance overall and on stakeholders, identify lessons learnt and good practice. The research is designed to take account of the ongoing capacity building impact that NACBO organisations have on the lives of people with disability and families across the lifecycle. This approach recognises that it can take longer to build a vision, skills and confidence and take on leadership roles.

Developmental evaluation is useful when projects such as these are breaking new ground with novel approaches (Patton, 2010).¹ The approach is **to incorporate the evaluation within the project**, as a way of informing change during the project. One of its features is to use the existing information and processes of the project as the evaluation data, so as not to impose additional burden and activities on the project participants. This approach means that we will draw from the project, our research knowledge and iterative knowledge from the evaluation as it progresses to contribute to project improvement during the life of the evaluation. This method includes providing opportunities to share and reflect on learning with the aim of refining elements of the project.

Our approach will be **flexible**, use a range of methods and examine different **sources of data** to inform the evaluation. Most of the project evaluation data will use existing data collected by the NACBO member organisations to minimise research burden, including documents, past program data or past results of participant surveys. The research team will visit each of the NACBO member organisations and

¹ Patton, M. Q. (2010) Developmental Evaluation. Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use. Guilford Press, New York. http://tei.gwu.edu/courses_approaches.htm#developmental_evaluation.

independently collect research data interviews with people with disability and their families, workers and staff involved in NACBO.

Co-design of the research. In the first part of the evaluation, NACBO members will host a co-design meeting with people with disability. They will be invited to comment on the research approach and refine the methods to ensure they are culturally safe, meaningful and inclusive. Later in the evaluation, people with disability will be invited to comment on the findings and assist with the dissemination of the research findings.

2.3 Approach

The research is from August 2021 until March 2023. The research will be conducted in three main phases:

Phase 1: Planning

Research Plan and co-design of methods, refinement of research approach – finalisation of plan (this document). Ethics clearance. Communication strategy (monthly meetings), rapid evidence review of key literature, develop fieldwork logistics.

Phase 2: Data collection

Visit to each NACBO agency; focus groups and Stories of Change 1:1 inclusive methods and interviews with project participants, families, staff and partner organisations (e.g., schools in the local area). Transfer program data and documents and Stories of Change developed by the NACBO staff.

Phase 3: Analysis and reporting

Data analysis, synthesis of findings, reporting, knowledge transfer.

2.4 Timelines

| NACBO Project | Aug 2021 to June 2023 | SPRC Flinders | Purple Orange & NACBO |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Co-design of evaluation | | | |
| Project logic and research plan | October | SPRC develop project logic | Comment |
| Co-design of research | Date TBC | Plan meeting | Invite people with disability, families to co-design |
| Program document transfer | Oct-Dec | | Send to SPRC |

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|
| NACBO Project | Aug 2021 to June 2023 | SPRC Flinders | Purple Orange & NACBO |
| Interim findings report – June 2022 | | | |
| First progress report: Research Plan | October 2021 | Research plan | Comment on draft |
| 2nd progress report | December | Prepare short report | |
| Onsite and remote fieldwork, interviews, focus groups, participant interviews | Jan-April 2022 | Flinders & SPRC collect data | Assist in fieldwork organisation |
| Analyse fieldwork data and surveys write report | | Summative analysis and reporting | |
| 3 rd Progress report: early findings from fieldwork | | Prepare short report | |
| June interim evaluation report | June | Send draft | comment on draft |
| NACBO practice change: July 2022 – June 2023 | | | |
| Discussion implications: Refine methods, practice | July 2022 | Organise reflection meeting | |
| Project documents and survey data, case studies | | | Send to SPRC |
| Analysis of surveys of participants and non-participants | October | | Send data to SPRC |
| 5th progress report | December | Prepare short report | |
| Onsite and remote fieldwork, interviews, focus groups, participant interviews | Jan-March 2023 | Flinders & SPRC collect evaluation data | Assist in fieldwork organisation |
| 6 th progress report | March | Fieldwork progress | |
| Draft final report to NACBO | First week of May | Draft report | |
| Address comments on draft | 1-3 week of June | Address comments | comment on draft final |
| Final Evaluation report and dissemination | June 2023 | Prepare for publication and dissemination to range of audiences | Assist in dissemination |

3 Methods

3.1 Stakeholders in the evaluation

The research will engage with and collect data from the key stakeholders in NACBO:

- People with disability in NACBO projects, capacity building, leadership, and groups over the life course
- Families and supporters of people in NACBO
- Staff, managers and volunteers in NACBO in each of the 6 sites
- Partner organisations in the local communities.

3.1.1 Data matrix NACBO evaluation

| Method | 2022 (year 1) | 2023 (year 2) | Who collects data? |
|---|--|---|--|
| Significant Change Story, person with disability, in inclusive method capturing change over the life course (before and during NACBO funding) | 5 inclusive interviews to develop for Stories of Change with NACBO participants at each of the 6 sites (past and current change) | Repeat – longitudinal data collection with the same or replacement 5 NACBO participants | Shared data collection between researchers and NACBO sites |
| Interviews with stakeholders – managers, family/friend or group facilitator/staff NACBO | 5 interviews per site x 6 = 30 | Longitudinal (repeat) interviews, ideally with the same 5 stakeholders from year 1 to document change over time | Research team collect all interview / focus group data |
| Observations of NACBO activities (peer groups, mentoring, trainings, workshops) | 6 observations (one in each site) occur during fieldwork visits | 6 observations (one in each site) (estimate 10 participants per meeting/group) | Research team collect data ideally in person during fieldwork visits |
| NACBO program data, deidentified information about participants in workshops, peer groups etc. | | | NACBO centrally collect and manage data and transfer it to SPRC at regular intervals |

3.2 Interviews and focus groups – staff and others

We will undertake a combination of individual and group interviews with staff and stakeholders at each NACBO organisation site. The interviews will help the team gain an understanding of:

- the range of capacity building activities offered by the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations
- successes/challenges delivering capacity building activities (including a focus on activities that appear intensive and expensive),
- operational facilitators and constraints (including short-term funding arrangements)
- perceived impact of engagement in activities on participants
- benefits/challenges in layering activities
- whether working cooperatively with the other NACBO agencies has led to a coherent approach.

We will conduct up to 5 individual or group interviews with staff and partners at each site. Some of these may be conducted during the site visit. Others may be conducted by phone or online to ensure inclusion of key personnel who may not be available during the site visits, to minimise travel costs and time, and to ensure that participation can be easily integrated into staff's working day with minimum disruption.

Participation in the interviews will be voluntary and we will ask our key contact in each agency to forward an email invitation from the team asking interested parties to make direct contact with us to arrange a time for an interview or to participate in a group discussion. All individual and group interviews will be recorded with permission.

3.3 Significant Change Stories people with disability and their families

A Significant Change story is a written summary of a person's experience of being part of the NACBO project and changes they see and are proud of in their life, preferably taking a life course approach. The life course approach will enable us to look at impact of capacity building over a longer time frame in a person's life. Acknowledging that making changes, gaining confidence, taking on leadership roles is something that does not happen overnight. The interviews will also explore participants' social and economic participation prior to connecting with the NACBO

agency and reflect on how it may have changed since engaging in the capacity building activities. Our inclusive interview approach will ensure that people can involve a family member or other supporter in the data collection process.

A significant change story can be collected by a member of the university team and/or the NACBO facilitator, depending on the preferences of the person and other considerations (e.g., COVID health advice).

The disability inclusive method/interview takes around 20 to 45 minutes. All data are collected in person by a disability inclusive method trained NACBO staff or researcher.

This method has been developed based on a previous UNSW research project that used significant change stories to explore empowerment of people with disability with homelessness ([Enable In Action Research, 2020](#)).

The research methods with people with disability and specific questions will be refined at the co-design meeting in 2021.

3.3.1 How to choose significant change stories

The aim of a story of significant change is to demonstrate how the NACBO model made a difference and the many ways it is impacting on people with disability, their families and supporters.

The significant change story could reflect,

- Significant change – what change did the person gain from their perspective (what mattered to them)
- Describe different aspects of the NACBO model – education, follow up, leadership
- Demonstrate the *process* (how the capacity building organisation and model achieved this change) and *what* changes were achieved.

3.3.2 Recruitment of stakeholders and participants

We will ask each NACBO agency to provide participants with information about the interviews and inform them that participation is voluntary. We are mindful of our duty of care to participants. We will provide participants with transparency around how the research findings will be used, and where appropriate will provide them with extracts

of the research findings. We will record interviews with participants' consent only and take written notes where someone does not wish to be audio-voice recorded.

Some participants may wish to nominate a family member, supporter or an individual in their circle of support who might be able to comment on any impact that participation in the program has had on the program participant or whether it has opened up opportunities for improved social or economic participation. If that is relevant, the participant will be offered the opportunity for the supporter to participate in an interview with them or separately.

3.4 Reporting and knowledge transfer

The evaluation findings and interim and final reports are made publicly available throughout the research period. The first Interim Evaluation report is planned for June 2022. The Final Evaluation report is planned for June 2023.

The research team will also publish evaluation findings in academic journals to add to the international evidence base and quality assurance via peer review.

All our publications relating to the NACBO project will be available online <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/our-research>