Improving the positive impact of disability services on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities in remote Australia

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National Rural Health Conference
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NINTI ONE

Image Source: Red Dust Heelers Facebook page

Disability in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

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16% of the population in remote areas

(AATSIHS 2013; AIHW 2015)

NINTI ONE

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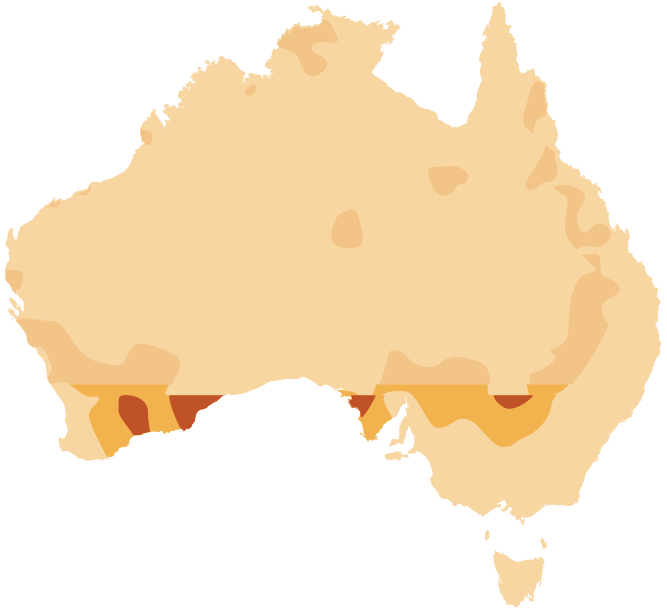

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35.7% of ATSI population living with a disability

and are **1.7 times** more likely to live with disability than non-Aboriginal Australians

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NINTI ONE

Disability-inclusive development

Image Source: Summer Foundation

Integration

Participation

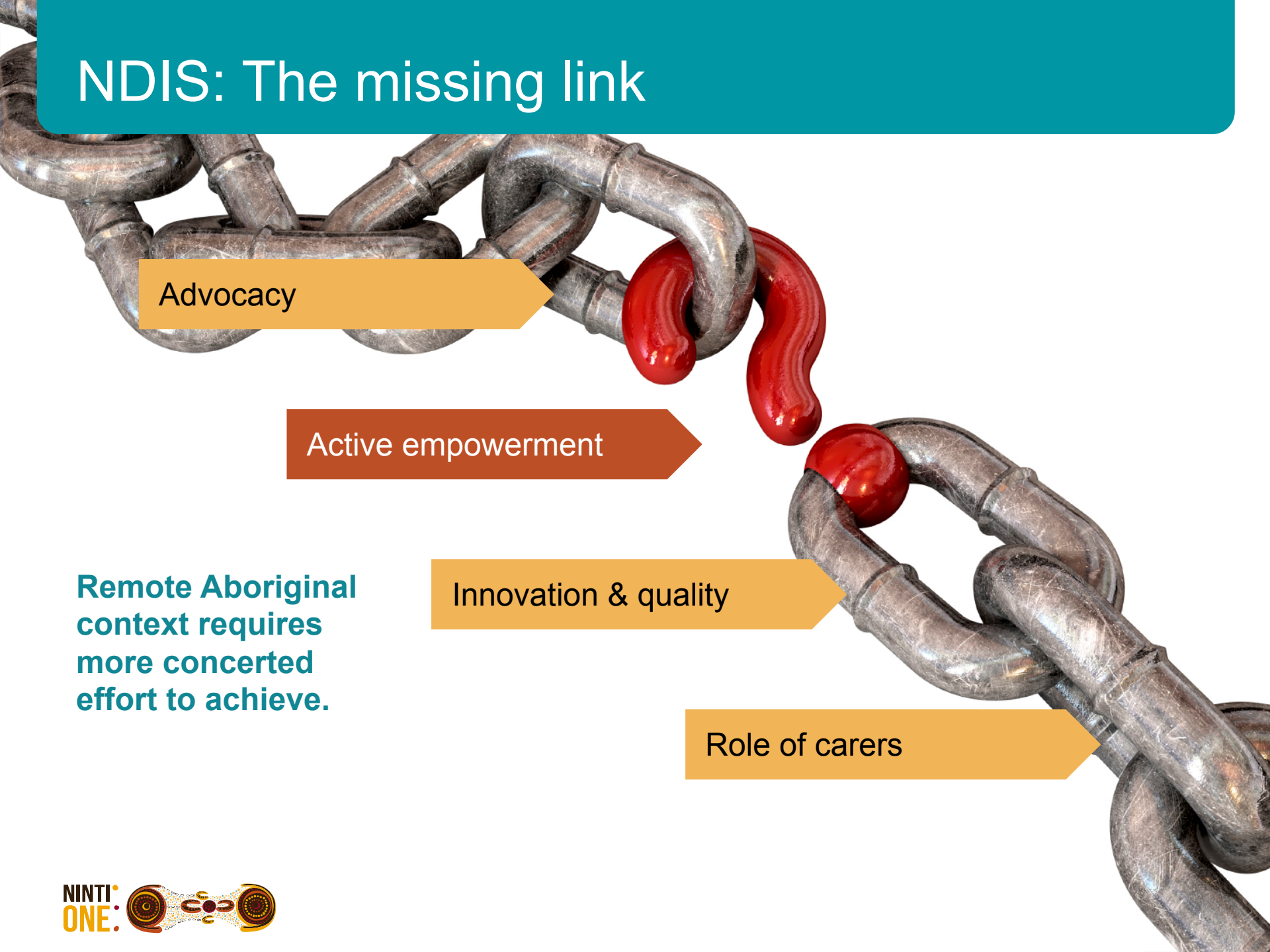
Poverty reduction

Equality

Inclusion

NINTI ONE

NDIS: The missing link



Advocacy

Active empowerment

Innovation & quality

Role of carers

Remote Aboriginal context requires more concerted effort to achieve.

Lessons from Ninti One

- Passive response to services
- Low knowledge about disability
- Uneven standards
- Cross-cultural capacity under-developed
- Lack of local disability advocacy groups
- Transactional rather than transformative

Recommendations

Research

- Alongside Aboriginal people in remote settings
- Determine **reach, coverage and character** of disability and services

Raise awareness

- **Emphasis:** role of the wider community
- **Aim:** tackling local obstacles and stigma

Recommendations

Close the Disability Gap

- Introduce new target into COAG's Closing the Gap framework
- **Aim:** to decrease the significantly greater chance of ATSI people to be living with a disability

Build knowledge and skills

- Augment National Disability strategy
- **Aim:** emphasise importance of knowledge and inclusion for enabling self-advocacy

Recommendations

Transformative services

- Develop specific plan alongside ATSI organisations
- Links education and inclusion to advocacy and empowerment strategies

Culturally appropriate services

- Train staff to work more effectively across cultures
- **Aim:** increase accessibility of disability services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Recommendations

Advocacy and empowerment

- Build capacity of advocacy networks empowering Aboriginal leaders
- Invite advocacy networks to advise and contribute to service improvement