

Exploring the Mobility Safety Concerns of Australians with Deafblindness

Listening to lived experience to improve safety, independence and access

People with deafblindness are experts in their own mobility and safety needs. This project ensures their experiences shape research, policy and practice that affects their everyday lives. People with deafblindness experience unique and often invisible safety risks when moving through their communities. Everyday activities such as crossing roads, navigating public spaces or leaving home can involve significant risk, yet these experiences are rarely reflected in research or policy.

Project lead:

Dr Meredith Prain

Research team:

Dr Sue Silveira, Dr Kathleen Tait, Heather Lawson, Stephen Hallinan, Lisa Chen, Melinda Carter

Lead organisation:

Able Australia

Partners:

Macquarie University,
NextSense,
Deafblind Victoria,
Deafblind West Australians,
Hunter Deafblind Hub

Why this matters:

Deafblindness affects both vision and hearing and can significantly limit access to information, communication and mobility. Many people with deafblindness are excluded from research because existing methods do not accommodate their communication needs. This exclusion means critical safety issues remain poorly understood.

What this project is doing:

People with deafblindness are co-designing research that explores mobility safety from their experience. Three in-person focus groups with deafblind people have been held with communication facilitation through Auslan interpreters and Communication Guides. Deafblind people have led discussion about barriers they face and what safer, more inclusive environments could look like.

Why this matters for people with disability:

By centring deafblind voices, this work aims to inform safer design, policy and practice that supports independence, participation and dignity.

This project is part of NDRP's Safety of People with Disability research funding, supporting research led by and with people with disability.

For more information:

Dr Meredith Prain,
Email: meredith.prain@ableaustralia.org.au

