Disability Healthcare Access Service (DHAS)

A NURSE-LED INCLUSIVE HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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CDDH VICTORIA
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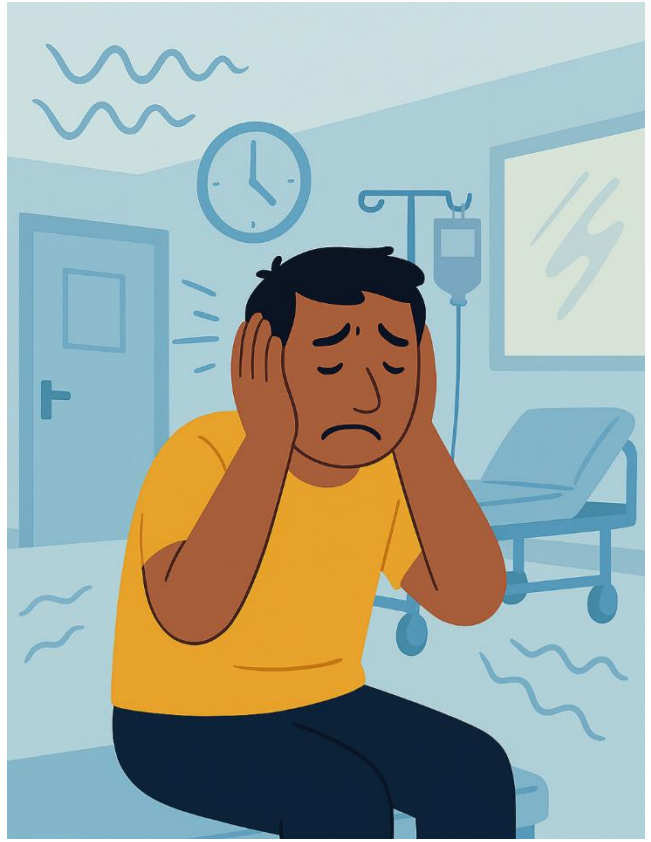
Better Health Better Lives

Monash Health

Monash Health acknowledges the Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples, the Traditional Custodians and owners of the lands where our healthcare facilities are located and programs operate. We pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

Background



- CDDH is a **statewide service** that helps adults with intellectual disabilities.

- In 2018, research showed that many people with disabilities had trouble getting healthcare.

- DHAS was created to **fix these problems**.

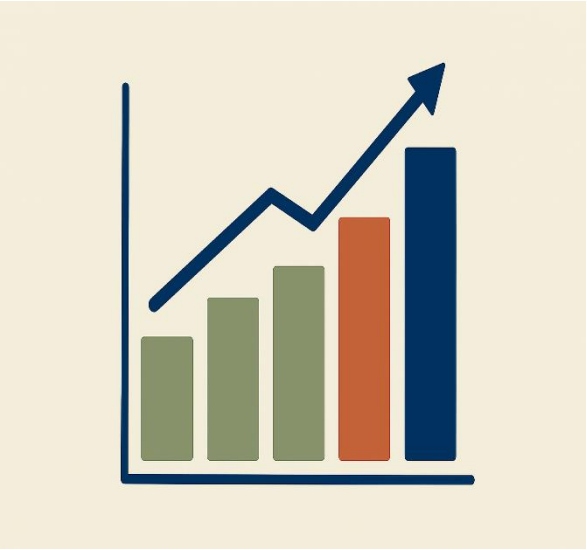
What is DHAS?

- DHAS is a **nurse-led health service**.
- It helps **people with intellectual and developmental disabilities** get the healthcare they need.
- It makes healthcare **easier, safer, and less stressful**.

Goals of DHAS

- Help people get **preventative healthcare** (like check-ups and vaccines).
- Make healthcare **less scary and more comfortable**.
- Use **research** to guide the service.
- Give people **fair and equal access** to health services.

How DHAS Grew



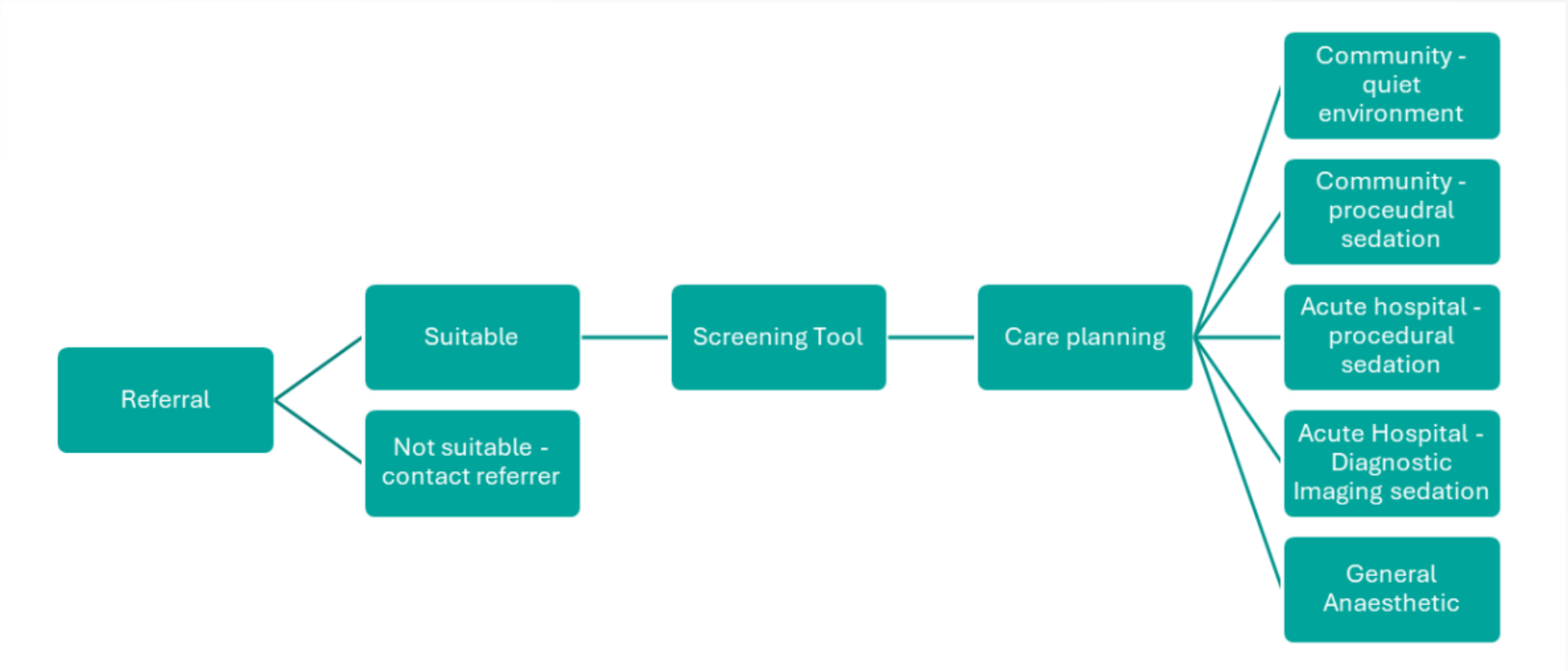
- Started in 2019 with **sedation-supported procedures**.
- Grew during COVID-19 to help with **vaccinations**.
- Changed name from “Investigations Under Sedation” to DHAS in 2022.
- Now includes **imaging, dental care, and more**

DHAS Support Levels

There are **4 levels of support** depending on what the person needs:

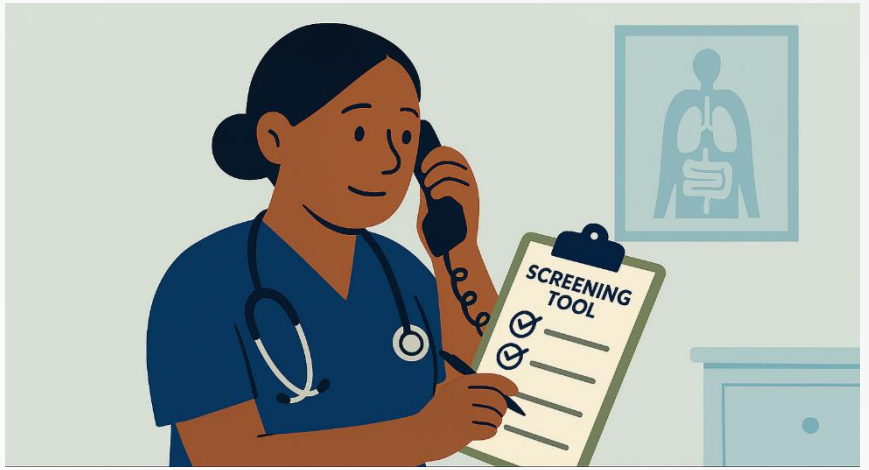
- **Tier 1** – Quiet space, calming techniques, mild medicine.
- **Tier 2 (Community)** – Moderate medicine and calming gas.
- **Tier 2 (Tertiary)** – Stronger medicine and calming gas.
- **Tier 3** – Full general anaesthetic.

Service Framework



Screening Tool

- Helps decide what level of support a person needs.
- If one level doesn’t work, they move to the next.
- People are **triaged** (sorted) based on urgency and complexity.
- Completed over the phone with the patient or someone in their care team



Screening tool research outcomes

- 127 adults helped.
- 197 procedures done.
- 98% success rate.
- Most people needed only mild or moderate sedation.
- The model predicted the right support level **91% of the time**.

Patient Checklist

- Created before the appointment and used to plan.
- Used before and during the procedure.
- Helps plan care and track how the patient responds.
- Guides future care decisions.

Medical interventions

Tier 1	• Quiet space, distraction/desensitisation techniques • A mild anxiolytic prior to arrival
Tier 2 (Community)	• Midazolam or Olanzapine • Nitrous oxide
Tier 2 (Tertiary)	• Midazolam and Clonidine • Or Olanzapine • Nitrous oxide
Tier 3	• General anaesthetic

Preventative Healthcare interventions

Tier 1

- Immunisations
- Physical health check

Tier 2 (Community)

- Immunisations
- Pathology
- Physical health check
- Nail cutting
- ECG

Tier 2 (Tertiary)

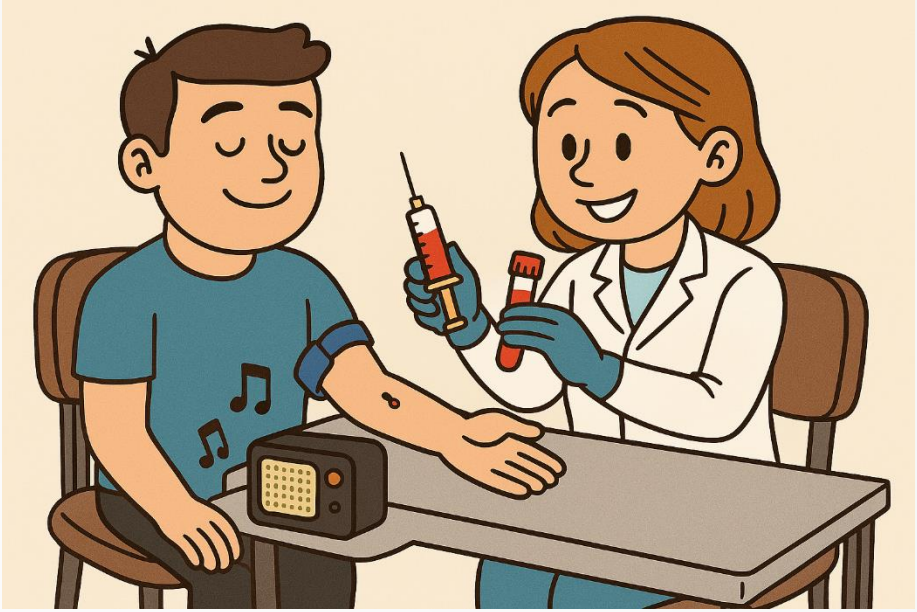
- Immunisations
- Pathology
- Physical health check
- Nail cutting
- ECG
- Diagnostic imaging

Tier 3

- Immunisations
- Pathology
- Physical health check
- Nail cutting
- ECG
- Diagnostic imaging
- Dental review and clean
- Ear check and clean
- Cervical screening

Example: James

- James has Downs Syndrome, Autism and epilepsy.
- He was scared of medical procedures.
- DHAS helped him get vaccines and blood tests in a calm setting.
- His family felt more confident and now he gets regular care.



Recent Publications by CDDH

•**Key Insights From a Rapid Review of Non dental Procedural Sedation Clinical Practice Guidelines for Adults With Intellectual and Developmental Disability**
Authors: Simpson, A.; Smith, J.; Yates, M.; Barden, H.; Gorton, C.; Templeton, M.
Journal: Journal of Evidence-Based Medicine (2025)
DOI: 10.1111/jebm.70003

•**Evaluation of an Australian Community-Based Model of Care for Adults With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Undergoing Procedures Under Sedation**
Authors: Golder, J.; Adams, R.; Calleja, S.; Templeton, M.; Foster, A.
Journal: Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities (2024)
DOI: 10.1111/jppi.12528

Questions?

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