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Joint National Secretariat

Disability Care and Support Inquiry
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
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By Fax: 02 6240 3377

The CPSU is one of the largest public sector unions in Australia with more than 180,000 members. The union comprises two groups - the SPSF Group and the PSU.

The State Public Services Federation (SPSF Group) primarily represents employees of State Governments such as State Government Administration, Education, Agriculture and Natural Resources, or their agencies like Universities, Electricity Authorities, Roads and Traffic or Water Resources bodies. We have branches in all six states.

The PSU Group's members are generally employed by the Commonwealth Government or its agencies, such as Tax, CentreLink, Defence, Immigration, and a significant number of private Telecommunications and Call Centre operators.

The SPSF group welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the **Productivity Commission's inquiry into Disability Care and Support**.

We have members represented in the Disability Care and Support Sector because:

- They are employed in the sector;
- They may have caring responsibilities of their own;
- They may themselves have disabilities

Initial discussions with our branches have revealed three key areas of concern:

- **Workforce**

The inquiry is examining *the feasibility, costs and benefits of replacing the current system of disability services with a new national disability care and support scheme*. Given that the existing system comes under the jurisdiction of the various State governments and comprises providers in both the public and private sectors, we are particularly interested in understanding how a **national** scheme would operate. Would it replace existing state-based service delivery systems? What are the implications for staff in the public sector, their

employment terms and conditions and job security? How will existing shortcomings in staff levels, training and skills shortages be addressed?

- **Funding**

There is no question that under-funding and inadequate resource allocation underpin the failure of the current system. What is the funding model which will best provide for a comprehensive and universal level of support to meet the needs of people with disabilities and their carers? What will be the impact of a new funding model on the provision of services in the public sector? How will a new funding model contribute to maintaining services in the public sector?

- **A National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**

While we support the theory of an NDIS, we do so with the overriding caveat that no such scheme should undermine in any way the entitlements of workers to compensation and rehabilitation under existing schemes. Neither should it be possible for employer costs or liabilities to be moved to any other schemes. Therefore it is particularly important to understand how such a scheme is to be funded and administered and how it is to co-exist with existing injury and disability compensation schemes.

Following further consultation with our branches and members and participation in the upcoming public hearings to be hosted by the Productivity Commission, we expect to be able to provide a comprehensive submission detailing our perspective on these issues in the second submission round.

Yours faithfully,



David Carey
Joint National Secretary – CPSU-SPSF