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A proud member of



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Disability Care and Support Inquiry
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601
Dear Sir/Madam,

Home Safety & Comfort P/L is a business that supplies mobility and rehabilitation devices to members of the public, hospitals, nursing homes etc. We service the mid north coast of NSW and have a staff of 10 people.

Many people with disabilities rely on timely access to a wide range of assistive technology (AT) that provides function and independence in their day to day living. Without this equipment they are extremely limited in their ability to carry out day to day activities or access the community independently. Other clients with more complex needs require substantial equipment for positioning, pressure relief, sleeping and mobility with the assistance of carers.

The existing, fragmented systems for funding equipment for Australians with disabilities is inadequate, funding does not come close to meeting needs, is vastly different between states and needs a thorough overhaul.

The implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) must ensure that people with disabilities have simpler, more efficient and much faster access to appropriate AT. It must also ensure that businesses such as Home Safety & Comfort are able to continue to provide high quality, ethical service to those in need of AT. Without a robust, competitive and profitable industry, people with disabilities will suffer reduced choice, lower service levels and increased costs.

An effective AT funding component of the NDIS must include –

Equal access to equipment for all people with a disability. The cause of the disability, age of the relevant person or address of the person should not be a factor in deciding if equipment can be supplied under a scheme.

A pre-approved funding model instead of the current NSW system of trial, wait and reassess when funding becomes available is not cost or time effective for prescribing therapists and funding bodies.

An effective preventative maintenance program for all equipment issued will ensure less expensive overall maintenance costs, ensure clients have less down time and fewer problems with their equipment and also contribute to the equipment being in a better condition for possible reissue.

Suppliers are a critical part of the equipment issue cycle. Without their input there are no trials to assist therapists in assessing equipments suitability, no repair services, and no one with the knowledge base to advise prescribing therapists of equipment capabilities.

A competitive supplier industry is essential for the long term interests of people with disabilities. Regional suppliers are an essential part of this as people cannot wait for someone from a major city to repair the equipment on their next visit to that area.

Too often, suppliers have no input into product decision making processes. It seems nonsensical for a person sitting in an office in capital cities, with no real knowledge of

equipment to be deciding what types of equipment may suit a list of products available.

The supplier industry can assist any effective funding scheme to come up with equipment supply models that are practical and cost effective. A suitable avenue for this is IRSA. The industry body that represents the entire industry and not push a single suppliers product range.

Home Safety & Comfort is also a member of the Independent Rehabilitation Suppliers Association and endorses their submission to the Productivity Commission to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

George King

Managing Director