



ST GEORGE ASSOCIATION

for People with Physical Disabilities Incorporated

Disability Care and Support Inquiry
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam,

The St. George Association For People With Physical Disabilities Incorporated is a community based voluntary organisation of and for people with physical disabilities. Members of the Association have a range of disabilities and are very aware of the costs incurred due to disability and the services required in order to function within the community. There is certainly an inequity compared to citizens without disability.

The Association appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Commission's current enquiry into the long term care of people with disability.

The Association believes and supports –

- the concept of a national disability insurance scheme
- funding to be through taxation – similar to Medicare
- the scheme being national in order to ensure appropriate support regardless of the individual's location
- the scheme being targeted to the needs of the individual with a disability
- the individual having the choice of direct funding to be managed by themselves or alternatively using a service provider as a fiscal manager (brokerage)
- the scheme being available whenever the need arises – not to be aged capped i.e. an individual's needs may change and support be required where previously this may not have been the case – separate to aged care funding
- it is essential that there is no age limit placed on entry to the scheme
- eligibility not being restricted to people with severe and profound disability as there is need for support across a range of disability
- eligibility being based on the individual's need for support/service and not targeted only to people receiving Centrelink payments
- eligibility and assessment being conducted in one process looking at the individual's overall needs, to eliminate being referred from one department/service to another
- using the model created by Life Time Care & Support
- people with disability are, and can be contributing members of the community and should be afforded the opportunity
- people with disability in being able to have a choice in where they reside and with what level of care they desire at the same time maintaining independent social and family involvement
- people with disability in being able to seek and gain employment, which in turn will contribute to the taxation pool of funds

Some of the costs faced by people with disability :

- Mobility equipment, wheelchairs (manual and electric) and other mobility aids
- Orthotics and other muscular/skeletal aids
- Wheelchair cushions
- In-house equipment – hoists, shower chairs and equipment, adjustable beds, computers
- Communication devices
- Attendant Care/Personal Care
- House cleaning
- Shopping and preparation of meals
- Transport costs – cars, car modifications, taxi fare costs
- Travel costs
- Medical costs
- Education and training
- Respite
- Continence equipment
- Ventilators and other breathing support equipment
- Ancillary services, such as counselling, physiotherapy
- Housing

In relation to the establishment of a national disability insurance scheme, and how this could be administered, the Association suggests that an Assessment Procedure could be through the disability arm of Centrelink, whether the applicant is a Centrelink recipient or not. This would use the already established offices and infrastructure of Centrelink throughout the country and their computer system. Additional appropriate staff would need to be employed, but this would be at a significantly less cost than setting up a whole new body. Funding from the national disability insurance scheme could be channelled through Centrelink.

In-home Assessment to be provided if the individual is unable to attend a Centrelink office.

Applicants wishing to apply for funding could be either self referral, or through their general practitioner, disability support organisation, specialist or hospital.

The Association recognises existing services such as Attendant Care, EnableNSW (Program for Appliances for Disabled People), the Home and Community Care Program etc. and recommends that the national disability insurance scheme builds on these type of services ensuring equity to all who require the service/support. An existing model funded by the Federal Government is the Carer Assist Program – perhaps broadening or adding to this Program would enable people with disability to access necessary support.

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Byrne OAM
Hon. Secretary

14th August 2010