

Productivity Commission Inquiry into Long Term Disability Care and Support: Response to Draft Report

Individual Submission

23rd March 2011

Submission made by:

Mr. Michael Herdman

Background:

I am a disability rights activist. I also have an intellectual disability, which was officially diagnosed in 1955.

I have been involved in the disability rights sector for about 40 years, alongside my wife, who is also a person with disability. I worked at Access Industries for many years with my wife.

I have been a member of People with Disability Australia (PWD) for 31 years, and received life membership in 2001. Between 1997-2001 I sat on the board of PWD.

I am now currently on the Board of Directors for the Council for Intellectual Disability (CID), who I have been with since 2000.

I am currently University of Western Sydney in a Bachelor of Policing.

When I was very young, some well-meaning neighbours suggested to my parents that I be put into an institution as I was demonstrating some challenging behaviours which they weren't able to cope with. I was going to be placed in an institution in Callan Park. Thankfully, my parents decided not to put me there.

I grew out of these behaviours at the age of 12. I have since received counselling and training to help with other aspects of my intellectual disability.

I made a submission last year to this inquiry. This is my second submission.

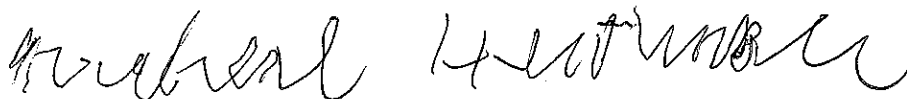
I will also be taking part in a public consultation.

I am happy to be consulted on any of my suggestions in the future, and am comfortable speaking to the media where appropriate.

Key Points/Additions to previous submission:

- I am very pleased that people with low support needs have been included in this plan.
- I think in order to fully fund this scheme sacrifices would need to be made to the salaries within the public services, especially from parliamentarians and from senators (federal and state). Backbenchers would initially have to take off approximately 10% of their wage, then this could be reviewed as the scheme developed.
- I think the NDIS should be the most important development to take place in Australia; I would want the ETS or Carbon Tax to be a vehicle for funding the NDIS
- According to the budget overview (May 11 2010) on page 7 (attached), Making Tax Time Simpler – there is a graph on how taxes could be made simpler. I think the new tax scheme for the NDIS should work to world standards, as indicated by this graph. In addition to this, pg. 9 of the same book, Aging Population, also mentions a graph which shows comparisons. Page 23 – New Health Investments in the 2010 – 2011 Budget – call national after-house GP medical advice and diagnostic service. I believe if people acquire a disability in their lifetime they need to be covered by these types of processes.
- There needs to be more money spent on the rehabilitation of war veterans and protecting our troops – the scheme currently doesn't cover this but it should, as many of them also have disabilities
- I believe that people should be able to do a self-assessment of their needs, and not have an external assessor. It would be more beneficial for people with disability if they are able to judge for themselves what they need. If people were assessed externally, they might not have any control over the assessment process and the supports they are entitled to.
- I believe that advocacy should be funded separately to this scheme, so people don't have to use their allowances to fight for their rights if need be. They should receive this support as they do now, without having to pay for it personally.
- I'd like to clarify my position re. Asylum seekers and mandatory detention. We're still putting up barbed wires fences, we still have a foot in each camp, and it's starting to get rather painful. People in these camps could very well end up with mental health problems. And they should be included in the funding, along with ADF personnel. I believe the terms should be gentler on people, and no mandatory assessment – people should be more welcomed into citizenship. These camps should be run by the Red Cross or another NGO, and not by the government.
- I believe that there is an issue over governance, as the proposed advisory body does not seem to have legislative authority. I think the advisory body should have fully legislative powers and be able to make decisions that are enforceable.

Signed



Micheal Herdman

Making tax time simpler

The Government will provide a standard tax deduction for work expenses, simplifying the tax system and giving Australians more time with their families.

Simpler treatment of work-related expenses

The Government will ease the cost of living for ordinary Australians, and make our personal tax system simpler, to minimise the time and resources people spend on their tax returns.

Under the current personal tax system, many people find it difficult to work out how much tax they need to pay or how much they should receive as a refund.

Calculating work related expenses is the main tax burden for many Australians.

As a result, more Australians use tax agents than almost anywhere else in the world.

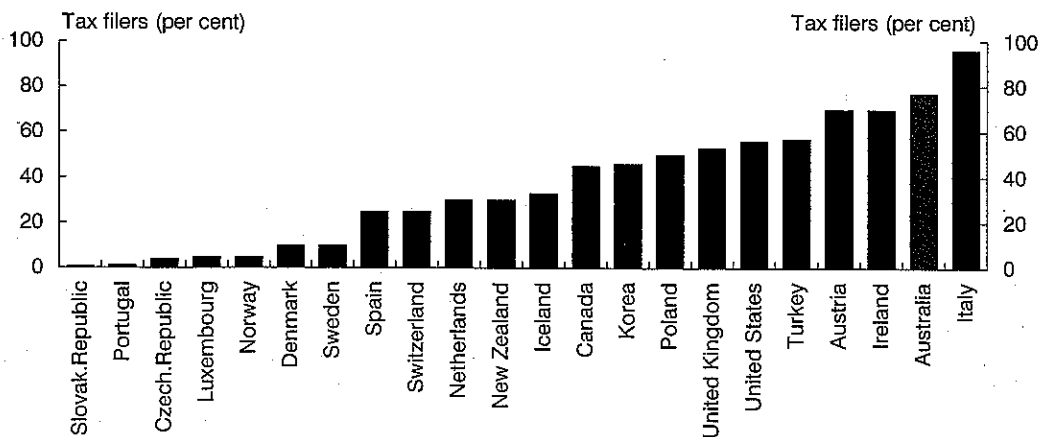
From 2012-13 the Government will provide taxpayers with the choice of a \$500 standard deduction to replace deductions for their work-related expenses and cost of managing tax affairs. This will increase to \$1,000 from 2013-14.

This will enable taxpayers to spend less time and effort preparing their tax return and more time with their family.

When fully implemented, 6.4 million Australians will find it easier to choose just the standard deduction and will see their tax drop by an average of \$192.

Taxpayers with higher expenses or more complex tax affairs can continue to claim their expenses and will not be worse off.

The Government will continue to improve pre-filling so that more Australians can have their tax return filled out for them.



Proportion of tax filers using tax agents

Ageing population

The *Australia to 2050* Report highlighted the challenges that population ageing and associated pressures in the health system will bring to bear on Australia's economic growth, living standards and government finances.

Australia to 2050

The *Australia to 2050* Intergenerational Report showed that over the long term, ageing will pose significant challenges.

Population ageing means fewer workers to support retirees in the future. The IGR projects the number of people of eligible age to receive the Age Pension will increase by around 150 per cent, highlighting the importance of adequate and sustainable retirement incomes.

The number of traditional working age people to support each retiree is expected to fall from 5 people today, to 2.7 people in 2050.

Reflecting this, the proportion of people in the labour force is expected to fall gradually, slowing the pace of growth.

Fiscal pressures

The report also projected that the ageing population and associated spending pressures would result in a substantial fiscal gap. Spending would exceed revenue by around 2¼ of GDP in 2049-50. The Government is responding to these long-term challenges.

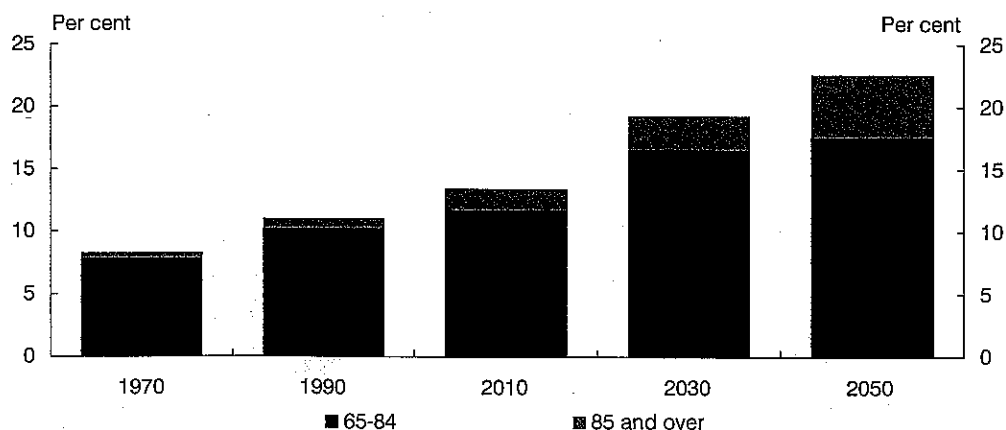
Responsible economic management, including policies that lift productivity and encourage participation in the labour force, will contribute to higher

rates of economic growth and higher living standards.

The Government is supporting productivity growth, through investments in skills and nation building infrastructure like transport, education and broadband, and reducing business costs through streamlined regulation and tax reform.

Reforms in education, training, health, employment services, paid parental leave and childcare will all support higher workforce participation.

The Government's implementation of the fiscal strategy is delivering structural adjustments to spending that address fiscal pressures over the medium and long term.



The proportion of the population aged over 65 years is increasing

New health investments in the 2010-11 Budget

The 2010-11 Budget delivers a further \$2.2 billion over four years to meet the needs of our modern health system, by investing in primary health care, training and supporting our nurses, and modernising our health system.

Access to GPs

All Australians and their families deserve access to high-quality GP and primary health care, that is well resourced, well staffed and coordinated.

Key primary health care infrastructure is supported with \$355 million for 23 new GP Super Clinics and around 425 facility upgrades.

The Government will invest \$417 million to enhance after-hours services and to establish Medicare Locals to identify local needs and better coordinate primary, hospital and aged care for Australian communities.

Investing in our nurses

The Government will invest \$523 million over four years to train and support our nurses. This includes \$390 million to better utilise practice nurses.

The Government is providing \$29 million in this Budget to support nurses in regional Australia.

An additional 300 registered nurse scholarships and 600 enrolled nurse training places will be provided, at a cost of \$21 million, to build nursing careers.

Modernising our health system

The Government will invest \$467 million to introduce personally controlled Individual Electronic Health Records that will keep our health system at the forefront of innovation, while allowing for more personalised health care and slashing costs of duplication.

The Government will also drive improvements in the health system, establishing tough new national standards and driving efficiencies through activity based funding.

Call national after-hours GP medical advice
and diagnostic service and receive advice from a nurse

if required

Receive advice from a GP

if required

Referral to an after-hours GP service in your
local community supported by Medicare Locals

Enhanced after-hours service