

Submission concerning a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

To The Productivity Commission,
Level 28, 35 Collins St
Melbourne, Vic. 3000.

It was with great interest that I read the draft report's recommendations concerning a National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is wonderful to think that such a proposal will be considered, incorporated in an overall health plan and reduce the inequities at present experienced by many severely disabled people.

While retired now, my working life as a physiotherapist meant that I came across people struggling to cope with on-going pain, dependency, inadequate equipment and no chance of joining the workforce. While many families show amazing fortitude and wonderful attitudes while coping with a disabled relative, the cost emotionally and financially is high.

Also, the fragmentation of the health system, of disability support services and the added inequity of financial and therapeutic support through worker's compensation and traffic accident schemes, makes centrally controlled, overarching insurance support sensible. Victoria's Community Health program would be ideally placed to administer 'packages' of therapy a range of allied health personnel are employed.

At these Community Health Services, a 'client centred' focus is achieved by service co-ordination. Where various health professionals work together, co-operation and rationalization of appropriate support is built into service provision. Also, community health services have experience administering and delivering present disability packages such as CAPS (Community Aged Care) and Linkages.

While the estimated cost of such an overall insurance scheme seems high, so many of the present costs are hidden. It would be interesting to ask families supporting a severely disabled person to estimate the loss of income due to foregone work opportunities.

Nobody likes to be dependent, often in chronic pain, isolated from the general community and feeling a burden. The least a civil society can do is to support these people financially and practically.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Aitken