

To the Productivity Commission Disability Care and Support

In '95, I was diagnosed with MS and over the next 16 years I have very slowly gone from a VERY active man who was sports orientated, someone who loved working and driving cars and then raising our children to the person in a motorised chair that is devalued by society.

Disability has changed my life dramatically, from being married with a house of my own, being VERY independent, to someone who is divorced, living in a supported accommodation unit, relying often on others for help.

I am bewildered, sad, frustrated and extremely annoyed at how life has 'changed' the rules without my consultation.

I am sure that's how many, many of us feel who have acquired a disability, whether it was genetic, an ABI, stroke, asthma or neurological condition. It must be even worse for those unable to voice their frustrations. I wished that carers and others (even my ex) understood what has been taken away from me.

I was thrust into a world where my attention went from choosing the right spark plugs to noticing the times for my meds or the accessibility of a house (does this place have stairs?). I've gone from someone who could travel anywhere to now having limitations on where and how I get about.

It's hard to search for a partner when society expects looks and image to be everything. My analogy is those box of rice bubbles in the supermarket that's been dropped on its corner.... There is nothing wrong with the contents, it's just the packaging!

I went to a place that specifically deals with disability and employment but their doorway wasn't suitable. When trying to open it and go through, my shoulder got caught but my chair continued – I now have a shoulder injury.

A man I met who had Cerebral Palsy (quite severe) could only find a packing job even though he was a person with IT qualifications. Why? Because he didn't look right.

Not only do people with a disability, family members and their carers have to cope with a major change to their lives, there are many other hurdles to jump.

The cushion I am sitting on belongs to a friend of mine which I have borrowed till I purchase my own. \$863 was the quote given to me.....Im sorry but I don't CHOOSE to have this cushion, I need this cushion!

My chair here cost just under \$10,000, a complete car that I have bought, for later, cost me \$4500, so go figure.

We, who need these aids and equipment shouldn't be 'victimised' for being in this position.

Five years ago, though my marriage was under a great stress, an NDIS would have given my family a well-needed boost of help to our ever-growing needs. We may not have needed to wait for home mods (the lift inside our house took 2 years alone).

Early intervention may have helped me stay employed and be able to find more appropriate work.

It may have meant I could take back some of the independence that MS had taken from me, chose to stay in my home and be with my family. Even if I did have to move, the NDIS could have enabled me to live independently, on my own with appropriate care, but somewhere where I can be with my kids and more importantly where my kids can be with their Dad. We have two children, a girl Jessie who is 16 and a boy Bailey who is 12. Their lives are moving at break-neck speed and sure they have their mother to answer any questions they may have, but I am sure there are times when they need their Dad. Gosh how I miss them!

Not only do I want a place of my own, but the accommodation place I live in is great. It is in a great location of Willimastown, close to the city, shops and the train line. It has 24/7 care and an RN a few days a week. It is 2 units with 5 residents in each, but each of us have our own room with an ensuite. Yes, I do need help, but once I am up and dressed, I don't need much help. I can't help but think, if I was out, my room could help someone who really needs it....like someone in a nursing home. Yes, people under the age of 50, are slowly getting moved out of nursing homes, but if the NDIS was implemented in the beginning, young people wouldn't have been dumped there in the first place.

(and I do mean dumped, because that is how I feel)

The NDIS would and WILL change the lives of many, please help us so that we can help ourselves.

Warm regards

Jason Anderson

59 Power Street

Williamstown 3016