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Commissioner Patricia Scott
Productivity Commission
Locked Bay 2 Collins Street East
Melbourne VIC 8003

Dear Commissioner Scott

I take great pleasure in welcoming the Productivity Commission's recommendations for an overhaul of the way disability services are funded and delivered as presented in the *Draft Report Disability Care and Support Overview and Recommendations*.

Youngcare is a national charity that helps provide choice in care and accommodation options for young Australians with 24/7 care needs. There are more than 6,500 young people living in aged care and 700,000 more being cared for at home with the assistance of family and friends.

Since 2005, Youngcare has been committed to raising awareness of the issues of people with high care needs across the nation, to drive change and create real choices for young Australians with full time care needs.

The proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) are great steps forward in providing a better system for many of the people with high care needs, their families and carers.

The Draft Report recognises many of the issues that people with a disability, their families and carers live every day. As the report confirms there is very limited access to essential financial, equipment and services support for those who find themselves in need of care because of a catastrophic injury or illness.

We particularly applaud a consumer driven system that provides choice, hope and possibility. A system that will allow Australians to live fulfilling lives and provide them with support to live where they want to, to work, pay tax, study, pursue hobbies and be a part of their communities.

Youngcare has been highlighting for many years now that many Australians assume that the system will look after us – currently it does not. That is why we need a better system. The system is broken and it is now time for it to be fixed. We believe that your recommendations go a long way to addressing many of these issues.

We also believe that the Australian public play a vital role in ensuring proposed changes to the lives people with a disability become reality. While we appreciate that advocacy sits outside the remit of the Productivity Commission, there needs to be a giant leap forward in the Australian public's recognition and understanding of the issues to ensure the introduction of an NDIS. The number of people who have attended forums in Queensland highlights that people with a disability, their families and carers are strongly supportive of an NDIS, however it is still yet to be seen as an issue of national importance by the general community. As a sector we must work together to build this understanding.

The Draft Report highlights the complicated nature of the issues and gives the nation the opportunity to start a constructive and positive conversation about changes including implementation, funding and cover. Put simply, an NDIS also makes good economic sense.

Recent economic analysis from National Disability Services shows that if only 10 percent of carers were able to return to the workforce because their family member had appropriate personal support, there would be a \$3 million boost to the economy. If just 2 percent of people could enter the work force and cease their reliance on the pension because they had appropriate employment training, then there would be a minimum injection of \$2.5 billion to the economy.

As you would have heard throughout your significant consultation, disability is not a life choice – these are things that are forced on people unexpectedly, impacting individuals and families in ways that no one could ever really grasp until they were in that situation.

Ultimately, the NDIS means that young Australians with a disability get the opportunity to live a life and not just exist.

Prior to the Commission's work there were hundreds of thousands of silent Australians out there who have never had a voice, who have never been listened to. The Commission has provided a time for them to be heard and the rest of Australia needs to listen and support.

Thank you for your overview and recommendations. We look forward to the next steps because Australians with a disability simply need a system that works.

Yours sincerely

Marina Viti
Chief Executive Officer