

From:
To: [Community Affairs, Committee \(SEN\)](#);
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill 2012
Date: Monday, 31 December 2012 10:57:27 AM

Please consider this email a formal submission by me to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill 2012.

The current disability system has many problems that need to be addressed.

As I have articulated to Prime Ministers, Ministers and members of parliament since 1995 and more vocally over the the past 6 years, current disability support pensioners over the age of 26 who are complex clients of the Federal Government's Department of Hearing Services are denied speech processor replacements and upgrades under the current legislation, while those clients whose disability is much less profound are given free hearing aids, which are of a similar cost.

Those who rely on speech processors cannot use hearing aids as they are too deaf.

These DSP clients, who include the deaf/blind, must self fund these processors approximately every 3 years at a cost of approximately \$12,000 per speech processor, or again become totally deaf. Again, those clients who have a lesser disability receive free hearing devices which are of a similar cost when purchased on the open market. The government purchases these at large discounts.

The government's standard reply is that to change the legislation is "Beyond the government's scope" and they suggest that these clients take out private health insurance or claim tax rebates, knowing that as disability pensioners they cannot afford private health insurance and that indeed, they do not even pay any tax.

The Federal Government refuses to do anything about this inequitable, unfair and blatant discrimination, condemning these people to eventually live a life of total silence once again, knowing that their Office of Hearing Service's own research found that clients with a profound hearing loss are 4 times more likely to suffer mental illness, often leading to suicide, due to their difficulty with communication and consequent isolation from society; they will obviously be much more than 4 times more likely to suffer mental illness when they are condemned to total silence once again.

This situation is actually outside and above the NDIS because these people are already clients of the government who are treated differently to others who are in the same class of clients.

This should be fixed before the NDIS starts.

All that is needed is simply the will to include all clinically needed hearing devices in the relevant legislation and to no longer exclude just one.

The main features of the NDIS that will make a difference to the community are:

Ensure support and equipment is available when needed, More opportunities to participate in the community, Older parents and families will not worry what happens when they can no longer provide support

The most important services for the NDIS to provide are:

Equipment and home/vehicle modifications, Recreation and community access,
Interpreters and other communication support

I support the introduction of the NDIS.

Because disability can happen to anyone at any time and current government programs and legislation can have a negative impact on people with disabilities.

I agree for my submission to be made public

Regards,

Mr Peter Demmery