

From:
To: [Community Affairs Committee \(SEN\)](#)
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill 2012
Date: Monday, 14 January 2013 3:12:37 PM

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.

Under the current disability system, those in receipt of a disability support pension, who are over the age of 26 and complex clients of the Department of Hearing Services are denied replacement speech processors and upgrades, while clients with a much less profound hearing loss receive hearing aids free of charge.

Both speech processors and hearing aids are of a similar cost, and as those who rely on speech processors are too deaf to be able to use hearing aids, this current legislation is clearly grossly prohibitive and discriminatory.

Thus, these DSP clients are forced to self-fund a processor approximately every 3 years at a cost of around \$10,000 - \$12,000.

I have personally witnessed the anxiety and the emotional, financial and social consequences that have arisen from this situation. My older brother is profoundly deaf and he and my father, who are both on disability pensions have already had to save up to purchase a speech processor in 2010. This will be an ongoing necessity for the rest of his life, in order for him to continue to be able to hear; therefore it places a crushing burden on both my brother and father. Obviously this is unsustainable, particularly as no one is willing to provide support for them apart from myself.

My brother's disability has meant that he faces isolation on a daily basis and this will only be exacerbated by a plunge into total deafness, caused by the inability to continue to personally finance replacement speech processors.

This problem needs to be addressed as soon as possible, and as it concerns already-existing government legislation, it should be rectified before the NDIS proper is initiated.

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

Ensure support and equipment is available when needed, Better access to mainstream support and services, More opportunities to participate in the community

The most important services for the NDIS to provide are:

Equipment and home/vehicle modifications, Employment support, Support for families and carers

I support the introduction of the NDIS.

I believe the NDIS is vital and long-needed as anyone can be affected by disability at any point in life and current government policies may not be adequate - as is evident in our case - in providing the necessary amount of

support for these disadvantaged Australians.

I agree for my submission to be made public

Regards,

Mr Thomas Demmery