

From:
To: [Community Affairs Committee \(SEN\)](#)
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill 2012
Date: Thursday, 3 January 2013 6:57:09 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.

My son has a severe psychiatric disability. It first began to show twenty years ago, (when he was fourteen) and in that time both my husband and I have provided support for him, seeking out the best medical help available in our city (regional Queensland) at the time. It fell woefully short of the mark and as a result, he now refuses to see any medical professionals other than the family GP. As his condition worsened, he became unable to work and I (his mother) became his official carer when he was placed on a Disability Pension - ten years ago.

In that time, I had been urged to seek a 'support package' from Disability Services Qld (DSQ), by several experienced people in the mental health sector. In my region, those 'support packages' were in high demand, with only a very small number being made available to cover ALL types of disabilities (about 8 per year, I think), while over 200 were on the waiting list!

Coupled with the fact that DSQ (in my region) did not even acknowledge psychiatric illness as a disability, although it was classified as such in the Queensland Health Act, I was unable/unwilling to expend the time required on such a daunting application which had no chance of success. It was also telling that I knew several people in the carer support group I attended, who were successful in gaining a 'support package' for their family member. Each family was very wealthy (by local standards) and each were prominent business/professional people in the region. As a result, those most in need missed out, while those with the least need for public-funded support were successful. It appeared that it was more a case of 'who you were' that was the deciding factor.

Early in 2010, my son's airconditioning unit broke down. For my son, an airconditioner is as necessary as a wheelchair is to someone who cannot walk. It came just at a time when when we had outlaid over \$2000 for pest control - an unexpected expense not previously budgeted for. As it was crucial to replace the airconditioner, on advice, I approached Disability Services Qld (DSQ) for help. I was given a form to present to our family GP, as well as was requested to write a submission on my son's behalf, as to the necessity of this equipment.

I went to considerable lengths to produce extra documentation to back my request, as well as a very explicit and detailed report from the GP. The following day (Tuesday), I received a 'phone call from DSQ, to say that my request had been approved, but I would get official confirmation on the Friday, after the committee met. I went ahead and ordered the new air conditioner, as time was of the essence. When Friday came, I received word that my application was unsuccessful and that I would have to seek help from other quarters! I was never given a reason for the failure of my application.

So, my one and only attempt to get assistance from DSQ in all the time I had been supporting/caring for my son, was rejected. I have no faith in DSQ. I can only hope the NDIS will provide some form of support for my son, who currently

views his future as very bleak, before it's too late for us all.

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

People with a disability can choose the types of support to use, The ability to receive services when needed and in the way that suits the person, Increased ability to coordinate services to suit the "whole" person/family

The most important services for the NDIS to provide are:

Equipment and home/vehicle modifications, Support for families and carers, Accommodation options

I support the introduction of the NDIS.

Any improvement on the current system will be a plus. For too long, people with disabilities have been overlooked, it hasn't been a vote-catcher, so hasn't been a high priority for governments. Those days are over, thankfully and now those in need are finally getting the recognition to which they are entitled. There needs to be support right across the board for people with disabilities, not just a select few, which has been the case up until now, as a result of some people being more articulate (or knowledgeable in how to 'milk the system') or better connections to the 'right people'. I am hopeful that the NDIS will see an end to these unfair practices.

I agree for my submission to be made public

Regards,

Mrs Rhonda Stock