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3 July 2023

Senator Marielle Smith
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Delivered by email to community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Submission on the Strengthening the Safety Net Bill

Dear Senator

People with Disability Australia (PWDA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the *Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Strengthening the Safety Net) Bill 2023* (Cth) (the Bill).

As a national peak body representing people with all types of disability, PWDA welcomes the increases to Commonwealth Rent Assistance, JobSeeker payments, the Disability Support Pension (Youth) payment and other forms of income support. However, given the increased cost of living, much more is needed to strengthen the safety net for people with disability and ensure that people with disability are not living in poverty.

Our **2023 Pre-Budget Submission to the Commonwealth Treasury** and our recent **submission to the Select Committee on the Cost of Living** outline the measures needed to improve the economic security of people with disability. In particular, we recommended that:

- The Commonwealth Rent Assistance should be increased by 50%

- The Disability Support Pension rate should always be set above the Henderson poverty line (including housing costs)
- JobSeeker payments should match the Disability Support Pension rates (inclusive of a proposed \$55 per week disability and illness supplement that we have outlined in our [2023 Pre-Budget Submission](#)).

The current Bill only increases the Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 15% and Jobseeker by \$20 per week. The Bill also does not increase the Disability Support Pension (DSP) for those on the DSP who are over 21.

While this does not provide sufficient economic security for people with disability, by lifting people out of, and preventing, poverty; in the interests of securing the changes outlined in the Bill we recommend the Bill being passed without amendment.

However, we urge the Committee and the Parliament to further consider targeted measures to ensure the economic security of people with disability, as outlined in our previous submissions.

If you wish to discuss this submission or our previous submissions, please contact my Senior Manager of Policy, Mx Giancarlo de Vera, or via telephone

Yours faithfully

Sebastian Zagarella

Chief Executive Officer

People with Disability Australia

Attachments:

- *Pre-Budget Submission: Budget Measures to Help Us Access Everyday Life* (27 January 2023)
- *Submission to the Select Committee on the Cost of Living* (10 March 2023)