**From:**
**To:** Community Affairs, Committee (SEN);
**Subject:** Submission to the Inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill 2012
**Date:** Sunday, 20 January 2013 1:02:11 PM

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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.

In my own family, we have seen many problems, from being told by the disability department that mobility equipment (wheelchairs, hoists, etc.) are medical equipment not disability equipment therefore they don't assist with funding towards it. To not being able to access in home personal care & domestic assistance or accessing the wider community. (my daughter is on a Needs Register to wait for possible future allocation of funding) Even accessing appropriate & sufficient respite care, comes down availiblity, costs of services ($50.+ per hour), & funding limits (my daughter is allowed 4 hours a week of respite care, which she utilizes for going out into the wider community when she is able to, or going to medical appointments if either her father or I can't).

Having broken my back last year & her father in heart failure has caused major restrictions on what we can do for our physically debilitated, disabled daughter. Who is in a wheelchair & needs assistance with most things. She is an adult now & we are starting to age. So we worry about what will happen to her. It has been suggested by her doctor that if anything happened to us she would end up in a nursing home due to her extensive needs.

Being told we need to have our daughter assessed by ACAT (aged care assessment team) to define her eligibility for home care supports or to go onto the Needs Register for Supported Accommodation, as there is very limited appropriate supported accommodation available in the wider community and long wait lists.

Why isn't there a DCAT (disability care assessment team) service available yet? As ACAT is reluctant to assess someone who under 60, especially someone who has just turned 21 years old.

Even accessing GARU (geriatric and rehabilitation unit) has been a long journey for my daughter. Involving me writing to the districts health heads & the QLD Minister of Health for permission for assessment & access to services only to be told in writing that she is too young to access & that they don't believe they have the medical services to support my daughters needs in the State. This process has being going on for over a year now. Finally my daughter is having her first appointment at a GARU unit at a major hospital closer to us next month. With the view of seeing whether or not they are able to assist in her therapy (they had previously rejected the type of support she needs).

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

Ensure support and equipment is available when needed, People with a disability can plan their lives and pursue their goals and dreams, 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:

Therapy and allied health services, Accommodation options, In-home care and domestic assistance

I support the introduction of the NDIS.

Now is the time for change. I believe that the NDIS has the ability to resolve many of the problems with the current State Disability Services.

Eligibility for current state disability services are restrictive, you have to fit a pre-classified disability criteria (which differs from state to state), does not encompass all people identified under Centerlink as being disabled.

The definition of disability verses medically debilitated is also a major issue, as if the disability department have a different definition of disability to other government departments. ie: Education, Transport & Roads, Health, Centerlink. There needs to be clarity & same criteria across all Federal/State/Local government departments & for the wider community to understand. Without this the problems will continue with people falling through the cracks & not being able to access assistance.

State Disability parameters for funding allocation usage are constantly changing, depending on where you live or who the facilitator is defines on what funding can be spent on.

There also needs to be a cap on the costs charged by the agencies/service providers to manage or provide support. Otherwise you will see spiralling cost increases (which are already too high) as in Aged Care services now.

Lack of support services & agencies that support varying disabilities is another issue. You can put in the funding, but without the appropriate backup of services being available to the wider community to access would mean that people still wont be able to get the support they really need.

Also the training of the people who work in the industry needs to be looked at. Many people who currently work in as support carers, etc. have limited training for dealing with specific disibilities (many variances within definition of disability) Tafe Certificates are broad & very similar to Aged Care Certification. However Disability needs change as the individual grows up, so the supports also need to evolve with the individual. The disability certificate doesn't allow for these changes. So often the support person needs to have additional training.

So I feel there are many variables to need defining in this legislation, as no two people are alike. Every person with a disability that will eventually qualify for assistance under NDIS, will have limits to what their funding will support, & there needs to be more infrastructure in place from a society & governmental view point. There is needs in all areas of disability support, from accommodation options & respite supports, education & work opportunities, community access & support services, therapy/allied health access & equipment/home or vehicle modifications, behavioural/psychological/communication support & lifeskill & crisis/emergency supports.

My hope is that the NDIS can resolve some gaps that are currently in the system & enable people of all ages with disabilities access to supports needed. Also for more support services to become available in the community.

I agree for my submission to be made public

Regards,

Ms vicki lyons