



the women's
the royal women's hospital

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The Committee Secretariat,
The Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Legislation Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA, ACT, 2600

Dear Mr Holland,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into the National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill 2012 (NDIS).

The Royal Women's Hospital is Australia's largest independent specialist hospital dedicated to the care of women and newborn babies. As such, we see a broad cross section of women in the Victorian community who require specialist maternity, gynaecological, cancer, neonatal and women's health care.

The Women's holds the principle of equity as core to its function, overtly stating that we care for women from all walks of life as one of the central tenets to our purpose. As such, any legislation that will support and empower women who suffer from disability to live active and fulfilled lives is to be applauded and supported.

The Women's has a specialist clinic that provides care for women with disabilities so that their maternity experience is a positive one. Born out of the principle of equity, we endeavour to ensure those who have special needs due to a disability can access the individualised care they require. To our knowledge, this is the only specialist service available for pregnant women with disabilities in Australia.

The Women's supports the notion that the accessibility criteria to the NDIS are very simple, and that care for each participant can be individually tailored to the needs and desires of the individual. This is consistent with our experience of empowering women to be active participants in their care.

Whilst the Women's is not currently a provider of community care in the disability context, we know the frustration and challenges women face in navigating the often complex disability sector, accessing meaningful care options and flexible funding arrangements. It is also important to note that carers for people with disabilities are predominantly women (ABS 2009, 68% of carers were female). The current under-funded and fragmented arrangements take a toll on carers' health and wellbeing, which may be alleviated through the NDIS and its emphasis on empowering people with disabilities. The introduction of this Bill should see a more streamlined and consistent approach to accessing this support.



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The National Disability Insurance Scheme Bill 2012 is an important and potentially transformative piece of legislation that may have the ability to meaningfully improve access to support and care for those members of our community too often marginalised due to their disability.

The Women's commends this Bill and looks forward to its broad implementation.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Lisa Dunlop
Acting Chief Executive
The Royal Women's Hospital