



The Royal
Society for
the Blind ®

By email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Social Services Legislation Amendment (Transition Mobility Allowance to the National Disability Insurance Scheme) Bill 2016

The RSB is a quality endorsed organisation, with over 130 years of service history and is the primary provider of a full range of specialist services to over 12,000 South Australians who are blind or vision impaired.

The RSB appreciates the opportunity to provide a response to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee on the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Transition Mobility Allowance to the National Disability Insurance Scheme) Bill 2016 (the Bill).

Firstly we are seeking assurances that with this amendment:

No person will be worse off under the NDIS?

If an eligible person decides not to participate in the NDIS program that after 2020 they will continue to receive the Mobility Allowance?

The Transport component of an NDIS participant's plan will be equal or greater than the Mobility Allowance?

Disadvantages of this Amendment:

People who are blind or vision impaired and those who turn 65 prior to the final roll out date within their state will also be disadvantaged as there is no provision for a similar program as Mobility Allowance within the new Aged Care Reforms.

Participation in the community through employment or volunteer capacity is an important part of the wellbeing of a person who is blind or vision impaired and also ensures their social interaction within the community.

Our Services

Adaptive Technology
Child & Youth
Community Education
Counselling
Employment Services
Guide Dog Service
Industrial Services
Library Services
Low Vision Centre
Mobility Services
Outreach Services
Peer Support
Print Alternatives
Recreation & Leisure
Systemic Advocacy

Low Vision Centre

Knapman House
230 Pirie Street
Adelaide SA 5000
(08) 8417 5599

Adelaide

254 Angas Street
Adelaide SA 5000
GPO Box 1855
Adelaide SA 5001
Office (08) 8417 5555
Donate 1800 644 577
Email mail@rsb.org.au

Industrial & RSB Guide Dog Services

11 Blacks Road
Gilles Plains SA 5086
(08) 8417 5600

Regional Offices

Mount Gambier
Noarlunga
Port Augusta
Smithfield
Victor Harbor

www.rsb.org.au

The Royal Society for
the Blind of SA Inc.

Currently the Federal Government's Social Policies do not align with a consistent age definition.

- NDIS – under 65 years.
- Disability Employment Program(DES) under 65 years
- Aged Pension Retirement 67 years (mooted to increase to 70 years)
- Job Access-Newstart under 67 years.

Under this proposal amendment, a person who is blind or vision impaired who retires/is unemployed/volunteering will not be able to apply for Mobility Allowance if over 65 years or does not re-engage with an eligible program within a 4 week period.

People who are blind or vision impaired are highly unlikely to obtain a new job or commence voluntary work within a four week period.

In conclusion, we request that the Amendment be changed to ensure that:

- Eligible people for the Mobility Allowance program are not forced to participate in the NDIS.
- People over the age of 65, seeking employment or volunteering are able to apply for the Mobility Allowance.
- The current period of grace be continued at 12 weeks for the Mobility Allowance program.
- That the Committee recommend that all age definitions be made consistent with the Employment/Retirement/Support programs.

The RSB is a member of the Australian Blindness Forum and supports their submission to this enquiry.

Should the committee require any further information or wish to discuss these issues face-to-face please do not hesitate to contact the me

TONY STARKEY

Policy, Accessibility & Client Consultation