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BY: _____

Submission No

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4 November, 2009

Dear Sir or Madam:

Is the current process for assessing a visa applicant against the health requirement fair and transparent?

No they are far from fair. DIAC states disability does not mean you will be refused a visa but peoples experiences invalidate this statement.

What types of contributions and costs should be considered?

If the person is receiving 'care' and/or support in their home country the costs of that should be considered. Not all disabled people receive any of this and the costs are nil in their home country so why would this be assumed to be different in Australia. Understandably not always true from deprived countries but when coming from the UK with the NHS and free services if they needed it they would have it. Why would this change once in Australia?

Are there additional factors that should be considered?

Does the disabled person work? Would they bring family, Australian spouse, children etc who would work and all pay taxes. Assumptions should not be made that all disabled people do not work, they work professional full time jobs and raise Australian children who will in turn be Australian tax payers.

Do you have personal experience of this?

Yes, my husband is a dual citizen of Australia and Britain. He also has Aspergers Syndrome (autism)

Facts.....

He went to mainstream schools in the UK & USA with no additional support.

He went to University in the USA at the normal age.

He also went to post graduate university in the UK to train as a teacher

He is now a teacher, employed full time paying taxes and National Insurance in the UK.

He needs no additional support and does not need medical care.

I am applying for spouse visa, I have epilepsy. Facts.....

I went to mainstream school with no additional support.

I went to university again with no additional support.

I am now a qualified Social Worker paying taxes and national Insurance in the UK.

We are planning on children, potential Australian Citizens.

My only health care costs are 1 neurologist visit per year and medication, which in Australia I will pay

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for myself as is medicare. I do not need hospital admissions, ambulances etc because I know how to manage my condition with medication so I do not have seizures.

Where are these massive cost Australia assumes in our case? Nowhere, Australia in fact benefits from 2 professional adult tax payers. Who benefit the Australian community with skills, children and payment of taxes.

The blanket assumption of a condition / disability Australia makes does not take in to account the individual, their past treatment, their ability to manage their condition. Nor is in line with human rights or disability legislation or the social model of disability.

Sincerely,

Michelle Bennett