

Disability Discrimination Act Inquiry
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins St East
Melbourne 8003

Re: Inquiry into the Disability Discrimination Act

Dear Sir/ Madam

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) will not be making a formal submission to the Inquiry into the Disability Discrimination Act. However, the AIHW has published a great deal of data on disability, including data on outcomes for people with disabilities, which may be useful in informing the Inquiry.

Publications that may be of particular interest include:

- AIHW 2002. Unmet need for disability services: effectiveness of funding and remaining shortfall. Cat. no. DIS 26. Canberra: AIHW.
- AIHW 2001. Australia's Welfare 2001. Canberra: AIHW. Chapter 8 provides information on disability and disability services.
- AIHW 1997. Demand for disability support services in Australia: size, cost and growth. Canberra: AIHW.

In our publications we aim to present information on outcomes wherever data are available. However, it is often difficult to attribute cause and effect (e.g., to attribute an outcome to a particular service or intervention).

As acknowledged in the Issues Paper for the Inquiry, definition is always a crucial issue in legislation and legislative review. The AIHW has been working on disability information and the promotion of national consistency in disability data for many years, and definitional issues have been central to this work throughout.

Based on our experience in this area, our recommendation is that definitions of disability and related concepts in the Disability Discrimination Act should be reviewed with reference to the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).

The ICF is an internationally recognised framework and classification, which establishes a common language for describing health and health-related states. Its use as a basis for developing definitions for a broad range of applications is encouraged by the AIHW, in the interests of promoting standardised, coherent and relatable information on disability.

Information about the ICF can be found on the AIHW website:

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/international/index.html> We would be happy to provide further information or advice regarding the use of the ICF in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act. Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of any further assistance to the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Madden
Director, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
3 July 2003