

## **SUBMISSION TO: The Productivity Commission Inquiry into Disability Care and Support**

I am a 53-year-old woman with a high level physical disability due to a car accident 30 years ago. I am one of the fortunate few in Queensland that are in receipt of An Adult Lifestyle Support Package. I choose to manage my own funding which, as the commission has no doubt heard repeatedly, is inadequate. I also choose to live in my own home in my community just as my peers do. I would just like to raise a few points to the Productivity Commission.

1. Funding a scheme to look after the lifetime care of a person with a disability should be considered along the lines of a levy like Medicare. While I do not have all the answers to funding a scheme to support people with disabilities for their full lifespan, my next points relate to things to consider when allocating funding to an individual.
2. Any funding scheme should be tied to an Individual not to a service provider/broker who cram multiple people into houses to get their "biggest bang for their buck". This ongoing practice is inhumane.
3. People with disabilities should [in some instances, in collaboration with their families] choose to explore managing their own Individualized Funding, be directly funded or choose what works for them.
4. Individualized Funding should be portable between states as well as between fiscal intermediaries. The latter would make service providers more accountable as people with disabilities could "shop around" and see which service/option offered them the best deal. Much like shopping around for a new refrigerator i.e. choosing which store offers the best dollar value and follow up service.
5. My individualized funding was with a third-party service provider, in Queensland, before I was granted approval to manage my own funding in 2004. My service provider "charged" 23% of the total funding package. By managing my own funding, my annual overheads are 6% -- 8%. I allocate more funding toward actual hours of support. Give people with disabilities a choice about the way they choose to manage funding.
6. I live in a house owned by the Queensland Department of Housing. I had to sell my own home when I ran out of my own personal funding [after 15 years of acquiring a disability]. Since living in public housing, I have been under a lot of pressure from Disability Services Queensland to take in a co-tenant as the panacea to inadequate funding. I still am. Any funding scheme should respect and accept the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities -- which includes the right to *choose* where and how they live. A choice that gives people with disabilities the right to live at the same standard as their peers i.e. part of the community neighbourhood -- not another statistic in an institution.
7. Equipment/aids to people with disabilities is essential not a luxury. In my case, before my accident I used my legs to walk around. Since my accident, a powered wheelchair allows me mobility around the house and in my community -- the world in general. Assistance aids can change the ability of a person with a disability to contribute and work in the community. E.g.

I am using voice recognition software and a microphone to dictate this submission. Without recognition software, I would not have been able to do so.

In conclusion, I do not have the answers as to how to go about funding such a scheme for the lifespan of a person with a disability. Individualized Funding which is portable -- allows people with disabilities choice. Adequate funding for every individual ensures that individuals in the community can live safely as well as contribute to their neighbourhood -- gain employment for example.

Please remember I am a person. Not a statistic.

Sincerely,

*Vicki Humphries*

Queensland