



"Allowance Incorporated"

~~ Attendant Care ~~

28 July 2010

Interstate Portability and use of carers in hospital of people with Attendant Care Packages

I am privileged to be the General Manager of what I consider to be one of Australia's truly greatest organisations. When I say great, I'm not talking size, because from almost every perspective, we are small. But I'm talking from the standpoint of what we do and how we do it!

Portability

Allowance Incorporated is a not-for-profit organisation which receives most of its funding from the NSW and ACT governments. A significant proportion of this funding comes via the Commonwealth. We are user run brokers of the Attendant Care Allowance Model, and all our users (who are referred to as participants) have a severe physical disability.

Allowance Inc is run by a management committee of six or more participants in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act; DADHC Guidelines and the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010

As brokers, our key objective is to ensure that our participants live their life as they choose, without the dictates of a bureaucracy or profitability driven business. We do this by offering support to our participants who employ their own carers on an above "award" basis, with the right to determine attendance times and hire and fire their own staff.

Whilst Allowance Inc is based in Sydney, we take on participants from all over NSW and the ACT. It is our hope to eventually take on members nationwide and whilst that's an issue for another time, there are constraints which are considered to be unjust.

Considering that this model only operates for people in NSW and the ACT, participants don't have the freedom of choice to move interstate and remain on their existing Attendant Care Package (ACP). They are given twelve months to make other arrangements with their new home state. Because of conflicting compliance and governance standards between the states, it is not possible at this stage, to offer ourselves as a broker in other states. The participants are given the choice to go on a "self-funded model" or coming under the care of either a government or privately run agency. For many of our participants, none of these are suitable for various reasons mentioned above and below. After discussions with many participants, it became evident that the flexibility offered by Allowance Inc has been life changing.

Whilst self-funded models give individuals a great deal of freedom, it can also take up much of their time. Many of our participants are extremely "time poor", as amongst them, we have senior management from the world's top 100 companies, barristers, accountants, authors, company directors and successful self-employed business people. For some, the administration of the self-funded model is time-consuming which can encroach greatly on their spare time. Allowance Inc helps to lighten that

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load. We can provide assistance with areas such as recruitment, review of fortnightly timesheets, processing of payroll, workers compensation and superannuation for their employees, and the preparation and forwarding of their Instalment Activity Statement.

In addition, we organise annual/biennial visits by the relevant professionals, to ensure that living and working conditions are of an acceptable standard and in compliance with the conditions of government funding. At the end of each financial year, Allowance Inc acquits unspent money back to the respective government and we are subject to an external audit.

We provide all of this for less than seven percent of the government funding we receive. What our participants would like to see, is that either an automatic allocation of a similarly funded ACP when a person has moved interstate for more than twelve months, or that the funding comes directly from the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, there is no equivalent to Allowance Incorporated in any other state!

Whether the funding comes from the states or the Commonwealth, we would like to see our accreditation emulated on a national scale, so that we only need to undergo the process once a year and can thereby, provide our unique service Australia wide.

Our participants are seeking the same rights that every other Australian enjoys, be they employed, unemployed, able-bodied or with a disability. More particularly, they want to be able to get up and go to bed when they choose!

Hospital Carers

Unfortunately, because of the nature of their disabilities, some of our participants are required to spend time in hospital. DADHC (and I assume Disability ACT) rules state that the participant cannot be attended by their carer during these hospital stays. Given that almost invariably, an average hospital has neither the ability nor the means to provide participants, whose needs at this time are magnified, with anything other than "normal" care. Hospital staff are already overloaded and stretched beyond their capabilities, and would welcome a participant's carer to come in and assist that person.

This causes a two-fold problem. Participants are not getting anywhere near the care they require, which then hinders their recovery, thus increasing their time in hospital. Their carers, who in many cases have become trusted and well trained, are effectively unemployed for that period and may have to consider terminating their employment and looking elsewhere.

Once the participant has been released from hospital, they then have the worry of trying to recruit a new batch of suitable employees, causing further undue stress.

We sincerely hope that you are in a position to consider the above matters favourably, and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

How to Fund The National Compensation Scheme (NCS)

- Commence a new publicly listed insurance - National Compensation Insurance Limited

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- Replace the various CTP insurance schemes in every state with premiums diverted to The NCS;
- Abolish workers compensation insurance in all states and replaced with a federal scheme with all premiums to be diverted to The NCS;
- The injury component of public liability insurance in all relevant insurance policies (less a commission) to be diverted to The NCS or separate policies to be only available from NCIL;
- Introduce a registration scheme for all push-bikes with all on-going registration fees (Say \$25- less state processing costs) to go to The NCS

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