

Who should be eligible for such a scheme?

All people with disabilities and mental health problems

The way people with a mental health illness have been neglected funding and recognition wise is a National disgrace.

People should be eligible from birth until they die

There is some suggestion that the Scheme should cease when one reaches the age of 65 however, given the paucity of adequate funding for the age care sector clearly this is not the case so til one dies is the "right" approach morally and practically.

How should eligibility be assessed?

Eligibility should be based on the kind of disability people have

Anyone who needs assistance to live with a disability should be eligible

The "degree" of disability varies enormously, however, the impact upon one's life must still be recognised and some sort of support through a Scheme is most definitely needed.

What kind of services should be provided through the scheme?

All assistance needed should be part of the scheme, including access to transport and access to participation in recreational activities, and access to education assistance

There is needed better access to these areas. This better access is Whole of Government, Local, State, Territory and Commonwealth, as well as Private and Publicly listed Companies, so-called Not for Profits, Community Clubs, Groups, the Nation as a whole. When any level of Government sets aside a budget for say transport, part of that budget should be set aside to make accessibility a priority. It isn't just a ramp for a person using a wheel chair to board the bus, that ramp can also be fabulous for a parent, grandparent, carer, anyone with a child in a pram. Disability is not just the physical, sensory, intellectual, mental aspect, but moreover the impact can either be contributed to or lessened by our environment, physical, virtual, social factors. If a website is designed so it is accessible by a screen reader used by a person with a vision impairment, the impact on that person is lessened. If, as is the case is in 95 per cent of the time a site is inaccessible the impact of the vision disability is increased and quality of life diminishes.

In addition to all assistance needed for the individual person the scheme should also provide community organisations and for example, advocacy organisations with general funding to allow organisations to continue to provide assistance to people with disabilities on a systemic level

People with disabilities can be much more involved in all these areas as far as decision making, policy writing and ensuring "full" access is a "right" not a luxury, bonus or something a person with a disability should be grateful for..

In the 1990's the CES, Commonwealth Employment Service, the DSS, Department of Social Security, and the CRS, the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service employed people with disabilities. Can we go "back to the future" and employ people with these life experiences and qualifications? What has happened to reports from that time? Could

they, the reports be dusted off and use be made of information from that time? People with disabilities have to be used if a Scheme as is the one being suggested is to have credibility, sustainability and validity as well as acceptance and transparency. A person with a disability's self-respect and self-esteem is paramount and this can be in part achieved by the individual having a "real" say in what services the individual requests, where they request them from, e.g., which organisation, choice is a "right" not a privilege. Individualised funding would go some way to empower a person were they able to have a greater say and control over what services they "purchased". The individual would be more "In Control".

Should informal arrangements be part of the scheme?

Yes, for example relatives who provide a support service for a person with a disability should be reimbursed. Those people with disabilities, their families, and any support network that may be in existence in country, rural or remote areas need much more "support" and notice taken of them than is currently the case. The lack of service for people in these non-metropolitan area is worse than wowfull. The situation of indigenous people with disabilities is a matter for Australia to stand internationally and intranationally condemned.

Should people also receive income support, i.e. the Disability Support Pension?

Yes, people should continue to receive Disability Support Pension, Rent Assistance, Mobility Allowance, Carer Payment and Carer Allowance.

A grossly overlooked and unrecognised part of the life of a person with a disability is the cost of disability, e.g., the almost prohibitive cost of refreshable braille displays, the cost of screen reading software for a conventional computer to make it accessible to a person who is blind or has low vision. I am a person in this position. To be able to read braille is a "right". Refreshable braille displays are a wonderful "invention", however, no one at this stage seems to have invented a way to make these affordable to the vast majority of people who are blind. A way to increase disposable income to people with disabilities is much better opportunity for employment. The percentage of people employed by Governments has halved in the last 30 years, since ironically enough the International Year of People With Disability, there are more students with disabilities than ever going to university, their work and qualifications are not being rewarded in the form of meaningful, gainful employment. Pision Australia say that over 60 percent of people who are blind or have low vision are unemployed, they are however employable. Organisations who are charged with the task of finding people with disabilities employment loudly trumpet the positive features and virtues of employing a person with a disability, their outcomes could be further enhanced with better financial incentives to prospective employers.

How can we ensure that application and eligibility is dealt with in a fair manner?

How should people be assessed:

) based on medical evidence

Whilst there is some contention as to how fair or effective the criteria used for receiving the DSP IT IS A GOOD STARTING POINT.

What should the assessment process look like?

Existing assessments for DSP should be used. Like the "pink bats scheme" and the "BER" a Scheme like this proposed NDIS needs to have it to be fair and seen to be fair and transparent. Advocacy both on an individual basis and systematic advocacy is imperative. Of course there must be an "appeal" system in place, indeed an "Ombudsman" style Position would be important with any Scheme.

The establishment of a National Disability Insurance Scheme or a Scheme with another name is vital. Its implementation must be of the highest priority and introduced with urgency. How it may appear in its infancy may bear no resemblance as to what it develops into. It cannot develop into anything if the only decision that must be made which is to introduce it is "squibbed" on by a Government that only talks and bulks, delays or "shelves" its responsibilities to social justice and a "fair go" for all.