

16 August 2010

Inquiry into Disability Care and Support  
Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428, Canberra City ACT 2601  
ATTENTION: Roberta Bausch

Email: [disability-support@pc.gov.au](mailto:disability-support@pc.gov.au)

Dear Roberta,

In this generalized submission from Community Living Project Inc. - a supported living service for people who have physical & intellectual disabilities - I wish to draw attention to some experiences that have affected & continue to affect people with disabilities.

It is hoped that the Productivity Commission will consider the following issues as relevant for discussion & inclusion in the planning for a National Disability Insurance Scheme:

- That younger people with disabilities will no longer be admitted to inappropriate (& long term) accommodation such as aged care nursing homes and hospital beds because they will be able to choose from a variety of supported living options such as:
  - individual funding allowing individuals &/or their families to choose & craft a home & lifestyle that suits their needs - eg remaining at home with appropriate supports, or setting up a home of their own, or they may be in a position to think about building a home of their own.
  - shared accommodation with 1 or 2 people who do not have disabilities in return for some contracted support responsibilities, e.g. tertiary students might well be interested in such an arrangement.
- That assessments & negotiations in order to access ongoing funding for support needs be simplified & streamlined so that people are assured of long term contracts (with review clauses for unforeseen circumstances). The current system requires funding contracts to be renegotiated every financial year, often in conjunction with a physical &/or psychological assessment. The uncertainty of ongoing & accumulative levels of funding is an additional worry & cause for anxiety that is ever-present for many people & families - both those who understand the limitations of Departmental & organisational budgets, as well as those who are unwell, &/or growing older &/or too tired to worry about the ramifications of reduced funding, or lobbying for increases.
- That people with disabilities who use equipment (eg lifters & wheelchairs) every day, whether indoors or out, in order to build & maintain a high quality lifestyle, can afford to acquire such equipment quickly, & can change models as soon as their needs change.
- That formulas or allowances will be embedded in contracts to fund training for support workers in the use of equipment, as well as compulsory & ongoing training & upgrading of required qualifications. These wages are currently deducted from existing funding contracts, much to the consternation of people who depend on converting every dollar in their contract into support worker hours/wages. Similarly when new support workers are employed, a significant number of orientation & on-the-job training hours are deducted from direct (hands on) support hours. Such reductions in support hours are resented by people needing those hours, & can damage the partnership with the service provider, no matter how carefully organised.

- There is a great need for simplified processes, with direct access to funding bodies in order to map out funding contracts. Recent feedback from one family, who was highly motivated to 'self-manage' their funding contract in a pilot program, reported that the process was complicated & onerous. The person & their family have been significantly involved in finding, maintaining & sustaining support workers for many years. They are more than 'clever enough' to manage complicated processes. CLP has supported them in their plans which were often superficially judged to be outside 'existing rules'. Similarly the promises of the current pilot program did not address their unique situation.

The Community Living Project Inc. is happy to provide further information - please contact me or our Executive Officer, Prue Gorman (08) 8384 7866,

Yours Sincerely,

Lesley Walker  
Coordinator of Support.