WHO WE ARE
This submission has been prepared in consultation with Lane Cove Council's Access Advisory Committee ("LCCAAC").

The LCCAAC is pleased to have this opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry into Disability Care and Support.

The LCCAAC is a formal Committee of Council. Its objective is to assist Council to increase and promote general awareness of access, mobility and safety issues in the community and, more specifically, for people with disabilities.

Members of the committee include interested local residents, council members and representatives from organisations involved in support and service delivery in the disability field.

CONTEXT
The LCCAAC considered the Local Government Association of NSW's draft submission to the Inquiry and overall supports those statements.

We also acknowledge that we were part of the Association's consultation process and that our comments were taken into consideration in the Association's submission.

However, we would also like to acknowledge the interest of LCCAAC's members in this Inquiry and therefore also submit our own specific comments for your consideration.

SUBMISSION
In relation to the **Core Issues** of the Productivity Commission's Inquiry, we make the following comments.

Who should be eligible?

➢ Any eligibility assessment needs to be holistic, flexible and take into consideration a person's needs as they change over his/her lifetime.

➢ The assessment team should be multidisciplinary.

➢ Instead of using just one standardised assessment tool, consider having one assessment tool per age group eg 1-5 years, school age, young adult.

➢ Any Commonwealth/State split in funding of services should not be aged-based.

➢ There should be no cut-off for people when they turn 65, but keep on going with current support levels, housing, etc.

➢ Support younger people more and use early intervention programs to prevent these people from admission to nursing homes.

➢ Any new services need to be accessible for people with disabilities.

➢ Ensure any eligibility scheme does not have a fragmented approach – it needs to work across government departments.

➢ Homogenisation of people with disabilities is not good – each person with a disability needs to be considered as an individual person with individual needs and desires.

The Nature of Services

– Transport

➢ Existing transport services need to be maintained as these provide a vital fall-back position.

➢ Currently, there is a shortage of accessible taxis and a lack of willingness from the drivers to take people with disabilities, so these services should be expanded and improved through driver education. We note that this may be an outcome from the current NSW inquiry into the taxi industry.

➢ In general, better transport options are needed, particularly with accessible facilities and public spaces to enable increased community participation.

➢ An increase in the provision of transport will increase independence and reduce costs in other areas of support, eg reliance on informal carers, more ability for carers to have choice of how they spend their time such as working part time, etc.

➢ Access to transport should be considered a basic right.

– Accessibility

➢ Access to buildings and public facilities is essential for participation in the community and is especially important for participation in the workforce.

➢ Greater education is needed in the community as a whole.

➢ Funding could be extended to Councils to improve accessibility to public buildings and public facilities.

– Housing

➢ The need for affordable housing is often a requirement for people with a disability.

– Support Services

➢ Councils already provide a range of support services and, if properly funded, are in an ideal position to expand their service provision.

➢ Councils in rural areas could act as a centralised agency for care and support services available for people with disabilities.

➢ In rural areas Councils may take on the role of service providers using a pool of casual staff.

➢ Councils could also take on an advocacy role. For example, all Councils could have an Access and Disability Committee.

➢ Greater educational emphasis should be placed on access for all ie. public spaces and public facilities to be accessible.

➢ Ensure any new system is easy to navigate.

➢ In general, the community does not have a full understanding of services currently available. Specifically, GP's and service providers do not necessarily understand the extent to which local Councils can provide information on service availability and indeed that Councils do also act as providers for a broad range of services.

➢ All stakeholders need to be aware of what is available and how to access it.

➢ There is a need for a greater communication between Local Government and service providers to avoid duplication.

➢ Any care and support system needs to have a wide coverage that is holistic. The impact of disability will affect people differently – at times the impact of a mild disability may be more severe than a more profound one in terms of social, emotional and psychological integration and interaction with the community.

➢ The Home Library Service could be used as a good example for service provision with positive social consequences. Similar services could be developed to increase social participation.

Workforce Issues

➢ There is a need to increase participation in employment and the community.

➢ The employment of people with disabilities in the workforce could be encouraged through advertising as an Equal Employment Opportunity employer.

➢ Councils could receive funding to assist as an employer of people with disabilities.

➢ Access to buildings and facilities is essential for participation in the community and is especially important for participation in the workforce.

Governance and Infrastructure

➢ We acknowledge that management of organisations providing support to people with a disability will be more difficult if care and support money is given to individuals to purchase services – if individuals are given responsibility for their own services, safeguards need to be put in place to ensure the financial viability of service providers.

➢ Councils already provide a range of support services and, if properly funded, are in an ideal position to expand their service provision.

CONCLUSION

LCCAAC thanks the Productivity Commission for the opportunity to provide input to the Inquiry into Disability Care and Support. We believe a new national disability support and care scheme is an opportunity to improve the lot of so many people affected by disability and their carers.