

My name is Stewart, I'm 25 and I live in the Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne. I have Cerebral Palsy as well as a hearing difficulty.

I am one of the people with disabilities in Victoria who are receiving disability supports as part of an Independent Support Package (ISP). I like the flexibility this gives me and being able to choose what I can spend my allocated funding on is great. Being under an ISP I feel like I have more control over my supports.

Some things about the supports I get at the moment are working well. The case managers I have are flexible and accommodating, they will try to follow up on things I need and they make an effort to help me navigate the system. When I have wanted to make changes to my ISP, all I have had to do is ring them up and ask.

There are also some things that are not going so well for me in terms of getting the supports I need. Up till now, I have still been relying on my parents to provide a lot of my personal-care assistance. I am getting married in February next year and for my fiancé and I to get on with our lives the way we want to, I will need some extra attendant support. I applied for this through the Disability Support Register at the start of the year, but I have not heard anything back.

When processes for getting the supports we need take so long, it certainly makes it hard to plan for and live the lives we want.

My ISP does pay for some of my taxi trips to and from work, but the funding I get does not pay for all the trips I need. Luckily, my current

workplace is prepared to cover some of the remaining cost, but I am still left with travel costs of \$150 per week – even with a half-price taxi card. With the enormous cost of taxi travel, I am also concerned about how I will fund this if my next workplace is not able to make a significant contribution towards the cost.

My fiancé and I have brought a piece of land in Werribee and we are planning to build a house there. It makes sense for us to live there because that is where some of our family are and land is cheaper. But Werribee does not have much in the way of public transport. Again, I will be reliant on taxi's, at significant expense. Our new house will also need to be modified to meet my needs. We have done our research and there does not seem to be much funding for home modifications. The costs of these will be huge, as I will need things like electronic doors and an accessible toilet. I have no idea how we are going to pay for all this as the cost of a mortgage is quite enough!

I strongly support the cost of home modifications being covered under the scheme. People with disabilities should not have to pay these huge extra costs just to make a home livable.

My fiancé and I have considered getting a modified car. The cost of this, as well as the driving lessons I need looks like it would be over \$60,000! How would I, or most people with a disability ever have money like that just for a car? You are either a TAC client or you can't afford it.

The people with the power to make decisions need to appreciate that there is often extremely high costs associated with living with a

disability and this new scheme needs to do something to cover those costs.

I believe modifications to cars should also be covered under the scheme.

I was fortunate to do some really great work experience through a placement at my Uni. After arranging the placement, I sat down with the employees to talk about what my needs were – they were very receptive. My work experience was crucial in encouraging me to set my sights high Without it (and the support I received from my Uni in organizing it), I don't think I would work for somewhere like ANZ – where I am now.

There needs to be more supports for people with disabilities getting into employment, including support for work experience placements. I know work experience made a huge difference to my employability and confidence and it would do the same for so many other people with disabilities.

It would be great to be part of a world where people with disabilities could get the supports and services they needed. It would take away the stress and would enable us to live the lives we want to live.