

To whom it may concern,

Arts Access Australia welcomes the draft report on Disability Care and Support released last month by the Productivity Commission that recommends the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The report says that the current disability support system be totally reformed as it is "underfunded, unfair, fragmented, and inefficient, and gives people with disability little choice."

Introduction of the proposed NDIS could help provide an answer through non-fault lifetime care and support for people with disability to reach their full potential.

We see this is a once-in-a-generation chance to make a change that will impact the ability of people with disability to work in and enjoy the arts for years to come.

This includes people like James Davies, an aspiring author from Perth. You can hear James' story on the Every Australian Counts website:

http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/our_stories/james_story/

A NDIS would also help build a system where the recommendations of the Cultural Minister's Council National Arts and Disability Strategy can be more effectively implemented. When people with disability don't need to worry about their own care, don't need to pay for their own access support, and have equal opportunities to enjoy and work in the arts, they can concentrate on becoming the artist or employee they want to be. And together, these two initiatives can start to address the national skills shortage of people with disability that work within the organisations that represent them, including in the arts.

We encourage the Productivity Commission to:

- Recognise that a NDIS can benefit millions of Australians with disability to participate more fully in the economy and community.
- Use the 360,000 people with disability identified as beneficiaries as a starting point for the scheme only, and make sure the door is open to extend it to everyone who needs it.
- Be more inclusive in its definitions of disability and who the NDIS is for (including recognition of the Deaf community, mental health service users and other groups who may not identify as people with disability).
- Clarify the relationship of a NDIS with disability employment services

We urge State and Federal Governments to support the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme without seeing the financial commitment as the sole recipient of large-scale disability sector funding for the years to come. Other initiatives, like the National Arts and Disability Strategy, still need your support.

Now, 18 months after the release of the National Arts and Disability Strategy, we look forward to seeing how these two exciting initiatives can both be given the resources to help make better outcomes for everybody.

Thank you for considering our submission. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any more information.

With thanks and best regards,

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