

3 May 2011

Inquiry into Disability Care and Support
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

Dear Commissioners,

The ACTU welcomes the Productivity Commission's draft report into disability care and support and the Commission's blunt acknowledgement that the present support system is "underfunded, unfair, fragmented, and inefficient". The Commission's characterisation accords with the ACTU's view, expressed in our initial submission to this inquiry.

Unions continue to believe that a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) would be a significant and positive reform, strengthening the social protection that all Australians enjoy.

In our initial submission, the ACTU advocated a scheme that would:

- provide a life long entitlement to person-centred support and care for people with disabilities;
- raise sufficient revenue to meet the demand for services;
- deliver revenue security over time;
- not displace existing workers' compensation or transport accident schemes;
- ensure that disability services organisations are adequately funded to allow fair wages and conditions for workers in the sector;
- not rely on competitive tendering as a funding model for service providers;
- maintain a strong role for the public sector in the direct provision of services; and
- not introduce new barriers for people with disability who wish to work.

The ACTU believes these remain appropriate guiding principles for the design of a National Disability Insurance Scheme. In many respects, the model proposed by the Commission in its draft report accords with these principles.

The ACTU takes this opportunity to reiterate its concern with ensuring that the Commission's report into disability care and support adequately takes into account disability workforce issues. We strongly believe that the effective delivery of an NDIS is contingent upon the existence of a stable, highly skilled, highly committed and properly rewarded workforce.

I attach for the Commission's information a resolution of the ACTU Executive, passed on 9 March 2011, which acknowledges the Commission's draft report and expressed support of the Australian trade union movement for an NDIS.

Yours sincerely,

Jeff Lawrence
Secretary



executive resolution

Wednesday, 9 March 2011

Support for people with disabilities

ACTU Executive recalls the 2009 Congress policy on Social Inclusion and Workforce Participation, which called for 'a thorough examination of a fully funded, no-fault, national disability insurance scheme'.

Executive notes that such an examination was recently conducted by the Productivity Commission, the draft report proposes a comprehensive National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), to supplement existing arrangements, including State-based workers' compensation schemes.

Executive acknowledges the Productivity Commission's draft report and supports a National Disability Insurance Scheme to provide much needed support to carers and people with disabilities.

We call on the Government to consider funding models that will guarantee a sufficient revenue stream to ensure that all Australians with a disability, whether born with it or acquired during life, have access to the support they need, including a stable well resourced and suitably qualified workforce.