

## **SUBMISSION TO PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION DISABILITY CARE AND SUPPORT**

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We wish to raise three points with the Commission. The first, we believe, merits considerable emphasis in the Commission's definitive report for reasons that will be outlined below. The second entails a small addition to the assessment process described in the draft document. The third suggests the inclusion of some useful detail.

1. We believe that emphasis should be placed on the issue of early intervention in order to maximise access for a child with disability to every educational opportunity with the potential to confer benefit in later life. While recognising that the scope of such beneficial interventions is very broad, we submit that physical assistance to enhance mobility sitting or standing will very often be an essential precursor to such children benefiting from other forms of assistance. Whilst some types of help may involve no more than a 'one-off' intervention, affording adequate ongoing equipment for a disabled child will frequently necessitate repeated assessment and adjustment of equipment throughout the growing period. Successful mobilisation enabling improved access to educational opportunities has the potential to equip a child to attain the best possible degree of independence together with the chance of securing fulfilling employment throughout life, perhaps over 4 or 5 decades. Appropriate structuring of work to facilitate entry and continuation in employment could complement this. Two goals concerned with human rights and responsible economic management could be simultaneously met. It is difficult to identify an initiative which would accord better with the Commission's remit of achieving a more productive economy and thereby raising living standards.
2. We applaud the proposal to institute a comprehensive assessment process for people living with disability. The benefits likely to flow from this process could be augmented if the protocol mandated that assessing teams determine whether a person could benefit from referral to one or more organisations equipped with the skills to provide equipment tailored to the individual's needs. We anticipate that there exists considerable undetected, and consequently unmet, need.
3. Finally, mindful of the reality that lack of access to appropriate assistance often reflects lack of knowledge of its existence, we suggest that compilation of an inventory of services available in the community (including Volunteer organisations such as Technical Aid to the Disabled – for example see chart attached which shows the TADACT Projects by client age range) would be a worthwhile supplement to the Commission's report. Existing volunteer based organisations can provide affordable customised equipment solutions.

As requested, the information regarding the volunteers and projects carried out follows:

State	Volunteers	2009/10 Projects
ACT	46	319
NSW	240	2001
Queensland	55	324
SA	60	625
Tasmania	12	58
VIC	138	624
WA	63	1726
<b>Total</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>5677</b>

