

Dear Productivity Commission,

Regarding: The public inquiry into a long-term disability care and support scheme.

I am the Paediatrician with the Victorian Paediatric Rehabilitation Service, Barwon, based at the McKellar Centre; as well as a Paediatric Consultant with Geelong Hospital for acute care with consulting rooms in Geelong for ambulant care.

I am struck daily by the long waiting lists for early childhood intervention services, the constant lobbying to get appropriate therapy resources for school-aged children, the lack of respite services and the huge gaps that families have to find for essential equipment such as a wheelchair, home and vehicle modification etc.

Australia's current approach to disability services is crisis-driven and welfare-based.

A National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) would change this. The Scheme would provide funding for essential care, support, therapy, aids, equipment, home modifications and access to the community, education and training. It would revolutionize the care and quality of life of persons with disabilities and their families. It would abolish the inequalities that currently exist between those with insurance, such as individuals who have sustained motor vehicle accidents, and families who have been successful in obtaining funding through litigation. An NDIS would provide a whole of life approach, commencing at birth for some families and becoming available later for those children and adults who sustain significant injuries or illnesses that result in ongoing disability.

Thank you for looking into the feasibility of such a scheme and I await the outcome of your findings.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr Mike Forrester