

30th July 2010

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

PERSONAL RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1:

- Individuals of all ages affected by physical, intellectual, psychiatric and age-related disabilities regardless of causes.

QUESTIONS 2 and 3:

- I would like to see something parallel to the healthcare system where the support needs of individuals could be assessed with on-going follow-up by a 'notional disability general practitioner' knowledgeable enough to provide referrals to specialist service providers (eg. special educators, physical/sensory/communication /behavioural therapists).

QUESTION 4:

- The amount of support should be determined according to need/s evaluated parallel to an accredited system of entitlements parallel to the healthcare medicare system. *With provision of a expenses safety net.*

QUESTION 5:

- The scope and level of training of support personnel should be dramatically expanded so that individuals with support needs are not required to accept untrained or inadequately trained personnel to implement services, as is commonly so today. There should be a professional career structure parallel to the teaching and nursing professions.

30 to 50 years ago it was not uncommon to have unqualified teachers in schools and unqualified nurses in hospitals, which is not tolerated today. Therefore there should be no place for unqualified personnel working in the disability and/or aged care sectors. The knowledge and skills required are often complex in the extreme, and training should reflect the fact, especially as individuals requiring the greatest support are frequently unable to communicate their needs.

QUESTION 9:

- A National Disability Insurance Scheme together with a network of appropriately trained and accredited service providers.

QUESTION 11:

- Immediate action to introduce tertiary-based disability support / aged care training and implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme as soon as possible.

Note that supported accommodation relies heavily upon relief staff from personnel employed in 'casual pools', and that to qualify as a casual worker in the disability sector, people with no pre-requisite training or skills are only required to complete 2 days training before becoming eligible for such employment!

QUESTION 12:

- Fund in-service training to improve skills and awareness of people currently employed in the disability / aged care sectors.
- Dramatically increase funding for supported accommodation options for people with disabilities, psychiatric illness and aged care needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

Yours sincerely,

Beryl Power