

ADEQUATELY FUNDED SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

What Australia needs

Let's build a society in which people with a disability enjoy the necessary supports and services to enhance full inclusion in the community. There is significant unmet need. We believe Australia can and should be a safe and supportive society where everyone can belong, participate and contribute as fully as they wish and are able, assisted by access to quality social services and supports to enable people with disabilities to participate in decision making processes that impact upon them.

Why it matters

Almost one in two people with a disability in Australia live in or near poverty (45 percent). Globally, Australia is at the bottom of the heap, ranked 27th out of 27 OECD countries measured. In addition, Australia ranks poorly in the provision of employment opportunities for those with a disability.

A number of people with disability live isolated, vulnerable lives on the fringes of society. These include people who are homeless, people who use alcohol and other drugs, people who have mental disorders which cause or complicate their disability, and Indigenous people. People with a disability who are, themselves, parents, and the burgeoning number of people with a lifelong disability who are ageing are also increasingly at risk of joining this group on the fringes. People in these cohorts often lack the skills to advocate for themselves, or the connections with family, service providers or other supports to advocate for them. There is a great cost to these individuals, to their families, to government, and to our society as a whole, in not reducing the barriers standing in the way of a decent life. No one should be left behind.

The implementation of DisabilityCare Australia began in six locations around Australia in July 2013 and a roll out for the rest of the country will take place from 2016. The transformation that has gathered pace over the past five years has seen the community get behind systemic change for people with disabilities. By starting on a small scale, by building up knowledge and expertise over time, by listening to participants and by sustaining and improving the systems' foundations, DisabilityCare Australia should contribute to a fairer, more inclusive community, where people with a disability are empowered and enabled to have the lives they yearn for.

DisabilityCare promises to provide tailored supports to meet the individual needs and aspirations of people with disability and, critically, to double the current levels of funding to meet those needs.



What Government can do

Implement a fully funded, robust system that allows for:

- Early identification, comprehensive support and sustained engagement with vulnerable people;
- Flexibility between government departments and other services in meeting support needs, e.g. mental health services, aged care services, family support and child protection services, and the justice system;
- Flexible policy responses that allow for collaboration between services and packaging of supports across service types where required;
- Access to advocacy services and the necessary supports to enable people with disabilities to participate in decision making processes that impact on them; and,
- Sufficient resources to meet the significant unmet need which currently exists for people with disability living in Australia.