



# What is reasonable to ask from carers and families?

**MEDIA RELEASE: September 28th, 2012**

Buried in the fine print on NDIS a new term has been added by the government boffins in Canberra

It will make families and carers of people with a disability shudder with horror!

The three big questions about NDIS have always been

1. Who will be eligible for services?
2. What level of service they will receive?
3. Who will pay in the long term?

Eligibility and availability of reasonable and necessary support will be the ultimate deal maker or breaker for NDIS. Our political leaders including Gillard and Abbott have yet to deliver anything that looks like a firm plan on who gets what under NDIS.

Cutting and pasting the NDIS discussion papers currently circulating has drawn attention to a major new concern

“The Productivity Commission’s report into disability care and support provided a starting point for Governments to design an NDIS.

The report proposed that all Australians would be covered by an NDIS should they require support from the scheme.

In one sense, the NDIS is for all Australians, since it would provide insurance against the costs of support in the event that they, or a family member, acquire a significant disability. In the Productivity Commission’s terms one of the crucial benefits of an NDIS is that everyone is covered for the costs of long-term disability

care and support, so people without a disability could feel confident that they or their families would be supported in the event of a significant disability.

An NDIS will be administered using an insurance approach. Like other insurance schemes, such as existing transport accident insurance schemes, an NDIS needs clear criteria about who is eligible to receive support. The Productivity Commission approach to describing who would receive support under an NDIS included consideration of factors like: Residence, age, whether someone is affected by disability, the permanence of the disability, the impact of the disability on functioning; whether the person's needs are best addressed in other systems and the need for significant ongoing support.

Each of these factors is important to eligibility for an NDIS in different ways as.

- There are approximately 22.7 million permanent residents/citizens in Australia.
- There are approximately 19.7 million people under 65 years of age for whom NDIS is recommended as eligible.
- There are approximately 2.6 million people with permanent disability under 65 years of age.
- There are approximately 992,000 people who are under 65 years of age, who have permanent disability, and who need assistance with mobility, self-care, communication and/or cognition.
- There are about 583,000 people that will be supported by the NDIS either with or without a funded package.
- There are about 410,000 people with permanent disability and severe functional limitation.

The concept of 'reasonable and necessary' support was used by the Productivity Commission to describe what support people could expect. The obligation for the scheme was to deliver the package determined by the independent assessment of need. This feature is an essential element of avoiding the chronic underfunding that has beset the current disability system.

A clear statement of what 'reasonable and necessary support' means is needed. Decisions will need to be made to balance what support is 'necessary' to address the impact of a person's disability on their participation in the community or employment, and what is 'reasonable' taking into consideration factors such as cost effectiveness, value for money of the support, efficacy of the support and relevant community standards (such as the expectation that everyone should have access to support for personal care if they need it, and community expectations about **what is reasonable to ask from carers and families**"

NDIS is based on the premise that families no longer carry additional responsibility for providing support to people with disability (unless they choose to do so).

Any suggestion that NDIS be developed, structured and implemented with an expectation that families be asked to provide support is unfathomable except maybe for a federal government desperate to save money on the public promises it has made.

Ms Gillard may well wish to clarify this point very urgently as no doubt a furore will erupt if NDIS turns out to be a rework of the system that is dependent on families and carers to deliver services the government does not want to pay for!

**David Holst**

Chair - Disability Speaks Steering Committee & Intellectual Disability Association of S.A (IDASA)

Mob. 0418 555 683

Web. [www.disabilityspeaks.com.au](http://www.disabilityspeaks.com.au)

Email. [disabilityspeaks@internode.on.net](mailto:disabilityspeaks@internode.on.net)



[www.everyaustraliancounts.org.au](http://www.everyaustraliancounts.org.au)



Disability Speaks is run by the Intellectual Disability Association of South Australia (IDASA) and will distribute on behalf of any organization that meets suitable criteria online information that is of wide disability community interest via our database that now numbers nearly 4,000 recipients for Government, advocacy groups and other major disability organizations. We aim in the lead up to elections, state or federal, we can distribute policy and support information from political groups. Such distribution is not in any way endorsement by Disability Speaks. From time to time Disability Speaks will also distribute media releases commenting on developments in the disability sector. We strongly encourage you to forward all releases to your friends, clients and disability supporters and encourage them to subscribe direct. To do so simply send an email with the subject "subscribe" to the address below, to unsubscribe please use "unsubscribe" in the subject line instead.