



Advocacy Position Statement

Access to funding, aids and equipment


What we believe:

- Spinal Life Australia believes the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) requires certainty of future funding to allow individuals with disability and the people and organisations that support them to develop a whole of life approach to care and support.
- The NDIS and National Injury Insurance Scheme Queensland (NIISQ) should work closely with the Spinal Injuries Unit to provide a seamless transition from hospital to home that allows the individuals and their family to focus on recovery and rehabilitation.
- People with disability should have access to appropriate aids and equipment, regardless of age.

The current situation:

- Funding for the NDIS is currently a regular budget consideration that requires annual allocation and agreement. This was the funding structure under the previous system and was the impetus for the creation of the NDIS. The old system was “subject to the vagaries of governments” budget cycles. People with disabilities have no certainty that they will get reasonable care and support over the long run. Resourcing might be good one year, but insufficient.”¹
- Delays in housing modifications approval is causing delayed discharged and bed blocking in the Spinal Injuries Unit. The NDIS approval process timeframes are not yet suited to newly injured individuals and are not flexible or efficient enough to allow unhindered delivery of care and rehabilitation. Individuals and their families are required to spend excessive time and emotional capacity on NDIS administrative processes, that should be focused on recovery.
- The Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) provides aids and equipment to eligible Queensland residents with a permanent condition or disability. With the introduction of the NDIS, it is still available to those ineligible for the NDIS, so individuals over 65. However, it is only available to people on level 1 and 2 Home Care Packages and not those on level 3 and 4. While people on level 1 and 2 packages have access to home care and equipment, people on level 3 and 4 only have access to home care, without access to subsidised equipment. There is no other source of funding for people who, in principle, have more need for that equipment.
- MASS only funds equipment to a certain amount, requiring people with more complex equipment needs to pay the gap between the standard equipment cost and their higher level of need. This leaves people with the highest levels of need with the highest levels of gap payments.

¹ Disability Care and Support, Productivity Commission Inquiry Report Volume 1, No. 54, 31 July 2011, p. 3.

- 
- Individuals with approved home care packaged often wait many months for access to their approved level of support. The system is not fully funded and people who have been approved for specific supports are put on a national waiting list that prevents them receiving the support they need until funds become available.

Spinal Life Australia will:

- In partnership with other disability organisations and peak bodies, lobby the government to fund the NDIS from a source that secures long-term, continuous funding, outside the political and year-on-year budget structure.
- Apply continuous pressure to the government to fund the NDIS to an extent that allows people with disability to live with dignity and to participate as independently as possible in all aspects of life.
- Advocate and work with the NDIS, NIISQ and the Spinal Injuries Unit to ensure that all home modifications and assistive technology requirements are approved and completed in time for a person's earliest possible discharge from the Spinal Injury Unit to allow a seamless transition from hospital to home.
- Advocate to allow access to MASS for individuals on level 3 and 4 Aged Care packages.
- Lobby the government to fund complex equipment through MASS to allow the full funding of equipment for individuals with complex equipment needs.
- Pressure the government to fund the Aged Care system to allow individuals with approved Aged Care packages to immediately access the highest-level package for which they are approved, without delay.