



equitable access solutions

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16th April 2018

Minister Dan Tehan
Chair | Disability Reform Council
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Minister Tehan,

I am writing to the Disability Reform Council (DRC) in support of Ms Marie Hell, who represents a very large cohort of ageing parents throughout Australia with adult sons and daughters living with an intellectual disability.

I also write this as a professional with 28 years' experience in the public and private housing and disability sectors. Much of my work is committed to working with this cohort of people to facilitate housing outcomes and specialising in the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) framework.

The issue of a severe lack of appropriate housing and accommodation options for people with intellectual disability, and the consequential impact of ageing parents who continue to provide care for their sons and daughters living with an intellectual disability is escalating at an alarming rate.

The need for accessible housing for people with intellectual disability has never been greater, and ironically this large cohort of people now face increased discrimination due to the SDA housing initiative.

Whilst the SDA framework is a wonderful initiative for the estimated 28,000 NDIS participants (6%) who will be eligible to access SDA, early antidotal evidence has indicated that many people with intellectual disability are not eligible for SDA, even though they have extreme functional impairment and would appear to fulfil the SDA eligibility criteria (even after exploring all available housing options). I also acknowledge that SDA eligibility is based on individual circumstances, and we should only generalise with great caution.

In many cases, people with intellectual disability who require access to accessible housing are being discriminated against by not being offered a tenancy when another potential tenant is SDA eligible and will provide the SDA provider with a far greater financial return. It should also be acknowledged that there are also some SDA providers who are delivering housing models that utilise SDA income to re-invest in accessible/social/affordable housing and offer other non-SDA eligible participants an affordable housing solution.

Specifically, to assist in addressing this issue, I respectfully request the DRC to please consider the following –

1. Consider the broader community impact and physical and mental health impact of ageing parents having to provide support and housing for adult children with intellectual disabilities living at home, and not being able to facilitate an appropriate housing solution for their adult child before they pass away.
2. Without SDA eligibility, there is currently a lack of alternative housing solutions and pathways for people with intellectual disabilities to have true choice and control in being accommodated in appropriate housing (supported independent living, not institutional group homes). State government social housing provides very little or no opportunity for this cohort of people.



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3. Acknowledge that an appropriate housing outcome and pathway for this cohort of people to access suitable housing is by being eligible and approved for SDA 'Improved Liveability' (based on suitable assessment for this SDA design category) provided they are eligible NDIS participants.
4. Support and undertake an actuarial analysis of the NDIS scheme financial impact based on the difference between a person living with ageing parents and having significant intellectual disability (extreme functional impairment) being:
 - approved for an annual SDA 'Improved Liveability New Build' payment and residing in a cluster housing model with shared on-site support, versus
 - the costs to the NDIS and the broader community for the same individual continuing to reside with ageing parents, taking into consideration current gratuitous care, physical and mental health impacts, paid regular current formal supports and reactive supports to seek a suitable housing solution when the primary care provider (parent) can no longer take responsibility for their adult child due to death or serious illness.

The objective of this actuarial analysis would be to inform and support decision making to broaden the SDA eligibility for this cohort of people specifically for an annual SDA Improved Liveability housing option payment.

I know from professional experience of being involved in many SDA feasibility studies for accessible housing projects, that SDA 'Improved Liveability' payments will facilitate good housing options and outcomes. Often, this minimal SDA annual payment is the difference between being able to sustain a new housing project for people with intellectual disability or the project not proceeding.

The housing sector and this cohort of people urgently require options such as these SDA payments to facilitate and deliver person centred housing outcomes, choice and control. Ageing parents desperately require certainty that their adult child with an intellectual disability has security of tenure with a suitable housing solution that is linked to an integrated support model.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue.

Yours Sincerely,

Justin Nix

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Cc Ms Marie Hell | Community Lifestyle Accommodation Ltd
Toni McInnis | National Disability Insurance Agency
Minister Foley | Minister for Housing Disability and Ageing
Cath Davis