

**JOINT MEDIA RELEASE
WITH
THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP
PRIME MINISTER
AND
THE HON JENNY MACKLIN MP
MINISTER FOR FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
AND
THE HON BILL SHORTEN MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR DISABILITIES AND CHILDREN'S
SERVICES**

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER NEW
APPROACHES TO DISABILITY**

The Productivity Commission will investigate the feasibility of new approaches for funding and delivering long-term disability care and support.

The Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, announced the inquiry at the National Disability Awards ceremony in Parliament House.

The inquiry forms part of the Australian Government's ten year National Disability Strategy being developed with State and Territory Governments and in consultation with the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council.

The Productivity Commission inquiry will examine the feasibility, costs and benefits of replacing the current system of disability services with a new approach which provides long-term essential care and support for people with severe or profound disabilities however acquired.

The inquiry will examine a range of options for long-term care and support including consideration of whether a no-fault social insurance approach to disability is appropriate in Australia. It will also examine if a scheme would fit with Australia's health, aged care, income support and injury insurance systems.

These are complex issues that require rigorous analysis, design and costing. The feasibility study will assess whether a long-term care and support scheme would be appropriate, practical and economically responsible in the Australian context.

The Productivity Commission will consult widely and will be assisted by an associate commissioner with specialist disability expertise. An independent panel of experts will also be established to advise the Productivity Commission and Government during the Inquiry. The

Australian Government will appoint the associate commissioner and the independent panel of experts shortly.

The Productivity Commission will report to Government in July 2011.

Figures released last week by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare showed that around 2.3 million Australians will have a high level of disability by 2030.

This inquiry is an opportunity to rethink how we support people with disabilities so that they can engage with their community, get a job where possible, and live a happy and meaningful life.

The Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments have adopted a bold vision for the National Disability Strategy - an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

We need to harness support across all levels of government to make a difference.

That's why the Commonwealth is also proposing that the strategy be developed through the Council of Australian Governments.

This long-term agenda comes on top of an historic increase to Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment recipients of \$70.83 per fortnight for single pensioners on the maximum rate and \$29.93 per fortnight for couple pensioners combined on the maximum rate.

The Government has also allocated substantial new funding under the new National Disability Agreement, with more than \$5 billion in funding over five years to the states for specialist disability services, including supported accommodation, respite and in-home care.

This includes the highest ever level of indexation and means that in 2013 the Australian Government's contribution will exceed \$1.2 billion, compared to \$620 million in 2007 under the previous government.

CANBERRA
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