

# Polio Australia

Representing polio survivors throughout Australia

Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds  
Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme  
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Parliament House  
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*cc: Hon Bill Shorten MP, Shadow Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme  
cc: Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services*

9<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

Dear Minister,

## **End discrimination of older people with disability by removing the exclusion of over 65s from the NDIS**

Polio Australia supports Bill Moss, former senior executive of Macquarie Bank, in calling on the Government to end the discrimination against people with disability over 65 years old by removing their exclusion from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Polio Australia represents the thousands of people living in Australia who have survived an onset of poliovirus infection and are now living with its effects. Many polio survivors have lived with disability since the acute infection, while others go on to develop disability later due to the Late Effects of Polio.

The majority of polio survivors in Australia were already over the age of 65 at the time of the introduction of the NDIS. Many of these people had been living with significant disability since childhood but were automatically rendered ineligible for NDIS due to their age. Additionally, there are many Australians who were aged under 65 and not living with disability at the time of NDIS rollout but, due to the Late Effects of Polio, acquired disability after the age of 65.

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Gillian Thomas, President of Polio Australia and a survivor of polio, says this of the NDIS exclusion: "This is a disgrace and it directly contravenes Australia's obligations to the United Nations; in particular to the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD)."

People with disability aged over 65 are eligible to access services through My Aged Care. However, there can be no denying the gross inequity of support when compared with the services and funding available through the NDIS. For many older people with disability, the funding for even a Level 4 package – the highest level available – falls well short of what is required. My Aged Care recognises no distinction in terms of package value between those with specific disabilities such as polio, and those experiencing the effects of ageing. In fact, many polio survivors had been living with significant disability since childhood, which obviously is not an effect of ageing.

Further, the enormous discrepancy in funding for assistive technology for those ineligible for the NDIS leaves many older people with disability with huge out-of-pocket expenses. If they are unable to afford essential equipment or home modifications, many may be forced into premature transition to residential care. Keeping people at home, and keeping them safe in their home, saves significant costs for the Government in the longer term – and is what most people want.

We look forward to hearing from you in regard to this important matter affecting thousands of Australians with disability. Polio Australia can be contacted by telephone on 03 9016 7678, or by email at [office@polioaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@polioaustralia.org.au).

Kind regards,



Gillian Thomas,  
President, Polio Australia