



9 November 2021

## **Disability Royal Commission expected to expose a national disgrace**

Today there is a public hearing of the Disability Royal Commission - Public hearing 18: *“The human rights of people with disability and making the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) a reality in Australian law, policies and practices.”*

Public hearings on this topic are well overdue. Spinal Life Australia welcomes today’s hearings and expects the Royal Commission will expose one of the worst human rights failings facing Australia today. Earlier this year, Spinal Life Australia launched the Disability Doesn’t Discriminate campaign to end age discrimination in the NDIS, which shamefully excludes people with disability solely because of their age.

Mr. Mark Townend, CEO of Spinal Life Australia and behind the national Disability Doesn’t Discriminate campaign, said there were many Australians who found themselves excluded from the NDIS entirely on the basis of age.

“We wrote to the current and former Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Commissioners and they have both indicated that the exclusion of people with disability from the NDIS on the basis of age is discrimination, and does not meet Australia’s obligations under the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

“We have campaigned hard on this issue, as both sides of Government seem content to actively discriminate against people with disability in contravention of our international obligations. This discrimination needs to stop, and it needs to stop now.” Said Mr. Townend

People with disability who were over the age of 65 years when the NDIS was implemented or those who sustained a disability after the age of 65 are excluded. The DDD campaign has over 20,000 signatures already and continues to build momentum leading into the Federal election. Politicians try and dodge this issue or evade providing a real answer or committing to meaningful action at their peril.

Make no mistake – the 4.4 million Australians living with a disability represent 18% of the Australian population. They are a significant slice of the electorate and have significant issues with this discrimination. We will be actively campaigning in marginal seats to demonstrate that all Australians care about this issue.

With a complaint about this discrimination recently being accepted by the Australian Human Rights Commission, there is nowhere for politicians to hide – action needs to be taken, and we think the party that commits to the most positive action in the election will secure significant voter support – enough to carry the election for them.

I call on all politicians stop hiding behind double speak and blaming others for this situation and instead demonstrate leadership and remove the age limit from the current NDIS eligibility criteria and end age discrimination now. This is an important election issue, as disability can impact Australians at any time, regardless of age.

### **MEDIA CONTACT**

- Ross Duncan, Spinal Life Australia – 0475 077 080

### **TALENT AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW**

- Mark Townend AM, Chief Executive Officer of Spinal Life Australia – 0404 871 579

**MORE INFORMATION** – [www.disabilitydoesntdiscriminate.com.au](http://www.disabilitydoesntdiscriminate.com.au)