

Q+A 4th August 2022

DISABILITY – NDIS – POLIO SURVIVOR

(44:36)

Shirley Glance asked: As a person living with polio since the age of 14 months and the president of Post Polio Victoria, why do people with a disability always have to explain their disability and justify their existence? Why is it that those with polio and other disabilities that are over 65 have been excluded from accessing the NDIS, and are not receiving adequate care via the Aged Care System? Our parents were assured that we would be looked after so why is that not happening!

SHIRLEY GLANCE

Hi. I'm a person living with polio from the age of 14 months, and I'm the president of Post Polio Victoria, an advocacy organisation here in Melbourne. Why do people with a disability always have to explain their disability and justify their existence? Why is it that those with polio and other disabilities, that are over the age of 65 have been excluded from accessing the NDIS and are not receiving adequate care via the aged care system? Our parents were assured that we would be looked after, but what's going to happen to us now?

STAN GRANT

Jenny.

JENNY McALLISTER

One of the things Bill Shorten, the Minister, has wanted to talk about with the disability community is the adequacy of all of the other pieces of the system. You're right that you shouldn't have to explain and people with disability shouldn't have to explain themselves and their circumstances over and over again. And I know that Bill's quite concerned that many of the pieces of our support systems don't respond adequately to people with disability.

To return to that question of centring lived experience and centring the experiences of people with disability and also some of the insights from their carers, we are really looking to return that original essence to the NDIS. There's a lot of work to do. It's been run down over time, and some really unhelpful, unnecessary constraints on the operation of that organisation have, I think, made it a really unhappy and difficult experience.

STAN GRANT

There's a very specific ask here, though, and that is that, you know, why is it that those over 65 have been excluded from accessing NDIS? Is that not something that can immediately be done? Is that something you'd like to see immediately?

SHIRLEY GLANCE

In a perfect world, what we would like is that people over 65 be included...with a disability, be included in the NDIS, particularly those, like myself, who have lived from the age of 14 months with polio. Why do I have to justify that I have a disability? And I have to prove each time that I have a problem... Not a problem, this is my life and I'm not going to get better. I don't want to be asked, "Are you feeling better today?" Sorry, I'm actually feeling a lot worse today. It's not only for myself. I know my MS colleagues and people with other neurological conditions, they're not going to get better. So why are they being shoved into nursing homes when they should be at home being cared for? The NDIS was set up for people with disability and it shouldn't be restricted to an age.

SARAH HANSON-YOUNG

You shouldn't have to wait for a perfect world to fix that. That should be able to be fixed.

STAN GRANT

Thank you, Shirley. And certainly that's going to be on the agenda, as you say. Appreciate that, Shirley. Thank you.

Well, Jenny, it does come to that very specific question. That's something that can be done now, couldn't it?

JENNY McALLISTER

I think the point, if Minister Shorten were here, I think he would say is that we want all of our systems to be responsive to the people who present to them. And so whether that's the school system or the aged care system, all of these systems need to be responsive to people as they present.

SHIRLEY GLANCE

But they're two different packages – NDIS and aged care. If you're in aged care, it doesn't mean that you're old. What about people in aged care who have a disability? Are they getting what people get in the NDIS package? No, they're not.

SARAH HANSON-YOUNG

We've got to remove that 65 age barrier.

SHIRLEY GLANCE

It is, and we're trying to ask people to work to, you know, the retirement age to be raised, then why not raise the age of getting into NDIS? And, secondly, when it was rolled out, it was unfair if you were living in postcode 3000 or 3165, right? And it was across the road – you got in, they didn't. Is that fair? It was rolled out across the country by postcode. That's not fair.

STAN GRANT

Thank you, Shirley. And certainly that's going to be on the agenda, as you say. Appreciate that, Shirley. Thank you. Let's go to our next question. It comes from