

Down Syndrome Australia calls for an end to discrimination on the basis of disability in migration policy

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Down Syndrome Australia (DSA) is pleased to learn about changes to the migration requirements for people with a disability which were revealed today. We are disappointed, however, that these changes do not go far enough to end the discriminatory approach of preventing migration based on the hypothetical cost of the disability.

DSA has long been advocating for changes to the migration system for people with disabilities. As part of our National Advocacy Platform, DSA has called for the Government to:

- Amend the Disability Discrimination Act to remove the exemption of the Migration Act from its scope
- Review the recommendations of the 2010 Enabling Australia inquiry and the 2012 Response
- Examine models from overseas such as Canada where barriers to immigration by people with disabilities have been removed
- Adhere fully to all provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability.

The new migration requirements which were revealed today mean that people with a disability will continue to be assessed as to their potential cost to the health system. This cost threshold at which they will be denied a visa has increased from \$40,000 to \$49,000. The hypothetical cost will be assessed over ten years, rather than their entire lifetime as previously calculated

“This is an important change for people with a disability who are trying to migrate to Australia. At the same time, it is likely that many people with an intellectual disability will continue to be turned away from the migration process based on potential cost to the system” said DSA Chief Executive Dr Ellen Skladzien.

“DSA will continue to fight for removal of this discriminatory approach to determining whether someone can migrate to Australia. It is simply not good enough for families who are contributing to Australia and who meet all other migration requirements, to be turned away simply because they have a child who has a disability.”

ABOUT DOWN SYNDROME AUSTRALIA

Down Syndrome Australia was established in 2011 as the peak body for people with Down syndrome in Australia. Our purpose is to influence social and policy change, and provide a national profile and voice for people living with Down syndrome. We work collaboratively with the state and territory Down syndrome associations to achieve our mission. More information about the work of Down Syndrome Australia and the contact details for local support and services can be found at www.downsyndrome.org.au.

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