



Governments in Australia, both federal and state, discriminate against their autistic citizens. While the introduction of Australia's *National Disability Insurance Scheme* improved the lives of many Autistic Australians, the lives of many are still far from equitable, and the Scheme is already under substantial threat. Autistic Australians are still frequently isolated, marginalized, excluded, segregated and institutionalized.

- 1) Many autistic Australians lost crucial disability services and other supports during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - a) Autistic students who need frequent additional supervision in their education setting were sent home to learn without supervision and support that is essential to their learning.
 - b) Australia's vaccine roll out simply missed most people with disability and their support staff when their turn came.
 - c) Diagnosis services shut down for extended periods.
 - d) Autistic Australians had varied responses to limitations on community access – some autistic people didn't mind social restrictions while very little was done to help those who were devastated.
- 2) Australia's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* that discriminates against autistic people for their distressed and frustrated responses when they find themselves in a challenging environment or communication with them is inappropriate or ineffective. Australia's legal system ignores their disability

and judges an autistic person's behaviour the same as people without disability. When an autistic person, whose diagnosis recognises communication and behavioural disorder and dysfunctional sensitivities responds physically out of frustration or distress, Australia's legal system judges them the same as someone without disability whose sole motivation is to cause damage or to harm others.

- 3) In particular, Australia's Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the High Court's deeply problematic *Purvis vs NSW* decision deny any autistic students who *might* be considered at risk of unwanted behaviour the *right* to attend school for their education. They lack the right to inclusive education and those who miss out have substantially reduced prospects for employment and financial independence.
- 4) Australia's *National Disability Insurance Scheme* refuses to fund evidence-based or good/best practice early intervention for many autistic children. NDIS representatives tell many families that the NDIS does not fund evidence-based early intervention for autistic children. The NDIS did not respond when concerns were raised. Some families bravely challenge the responsible government agency through the legal system with varying degrees of success, but most vulnerable families are understandably unwilling to risk legal action against government.
- 5) Autistic Australians with mental illness are often denied treatment and marginalized for their mental illness. Mental health services say that autism is not a mental illness; they refuse to treat comorbid mental illness for many autistic people.
- 6) Some health services in Australia regard autistic people as unworthy or too difficult to treat. Some state-funded health and medical services deny

access to autistic people or discharge autistic patients prematurely. Many autistic people cannot afford private health services.

- 7) Most autistic people needing supported accommodation when they leave the family home are housed in group homes which function typically as chronically under-resourced institutions.

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