

Submission for consideration regarding the bill :

Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 1) Bill 2014 and Social Services and Other
Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2014

Hello, i would like to express my opinion regarding the Bill pending in this email.

I am a Disabled pensioner on the DSP . I am also single , 59 years old and having to support myself. I have no family within 800 Kilometers of me and although i live with friends i cannot rely on them for my daily needs .

While there are several issues , actually all of them , that concern me in this Bill , the one i am most concerned about is the change to the Portability of the DSP .

I and some others i know have family abroad. I have a brother who has a family in S.E.Asia. I now have a new nephew and sister in law as of about 5 years ago and my brother would pay for me to come and visit on many occasions. Whilst there i also discovered that i could get services at a very affordable rate that would greatly assist in one of my medical conditions . These services in Australia are out of my reach as they are not covered by Medicare . I would have to pay for them out of my pocket and at around \$60 per visit for a Chiropractor i would often have to just sit with the pain and remain immobile until it passed. Sometimes this would be days.

I have discovered that whilst there , i have been able to enjoy a lifestyle, albeit for only 6 weeks at a time now , that gives me great comfort. I can afford so many more things that i cannot at home in Australia. For that short period of time i can have all my meals made for me and brought to me or i can go out and eat for a fraction of the cost here, resulting in a much better diet. All my laundry is collected, washed and returned . I have a companion who can look after me when needed and tend to any of the things i cannot do for myself. So many services are available to me that i cannot afford at home , even small things like entertaining myself by going to a movie .

With cheap budget airfares and the help of my brother i was able to go and experience a lifestyle that was previously unavailable to me in Australia. And initially i was able to do this twice a year for 3 months at a time . Then they reduced the portability rules to 6 weeks and i suddenly felt saddened and disheartened , but i had to make do .

While i can probably live with some of the new changes that are being proposed in this bill , even though i hope to god that it does not go through, to be further hamstrung and humiliated by these new portability rules , to have what seems like my right to see my family and enjoy a lifestyle that makes my life more comfortable taken away in pieces until i have no freedom left, is having a disastrous effect on my mental state. I feel cheated, belittled , humiliated , defeated and like my rights as an Australian citizen are being taken away piece by piece in order to save a few dollars.

And i know others who feel the same , who have been able like me , to have their lives improved and made more comfortable abroad when they could not attain such comfort at home . Its a terrible thing to see the Government of this country removing your freedoms and rights as a citizen of this country. Narrowing your opportunities for a chance at a dignified life where you can eat good food , wear clean clothes , and not be looked down upon because of your disability , basic human rights , to the point where one feels like a child being told to " stay in your room and dont come out until your told " .

Please reconsider this bill . Please dont make the disabled suffer any more because some may have abused the system or money needs to be saved . I dont know what the reasons are for changing the portability rules but consider the damage to peoples dignity , their lives , and their rights to a decent life wherever it might be . Its hard enough living with a disability let alone being told that because of it you dont deserve your freedom.

Sincerely