



Australia's disability services —promoting participation

At its public hearing on Wednesday 25 November 2009, the Migration Committee will hear from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) about what is happening with disability policy and services in Australia.

The hearing is part of the Committee's current inquiry into the migration treatment of disability, which is considering how Australia might assess the potential costs and benefits represented by a person with a disability, disease or condition.

"The benefits of migration to the Australian economy are widely recognised," Mr Danby said. "Evidence from FaHCSIA will provide a better understanding of the current costs of disability support services, of the wider benefits to the Australian community, and of the potential to build economic participation of people with a disability and their carers."

"Many submissions to the inquiry have argued that our understanding of disability has evolved but our migration rules have not kept pace, framing disability solely in terms of liability."

"The Committee looks forward to the hearing as a way of putting our migration rules in context," Mr Danby said.

In addition to the Disability Support Pension and Carer support payments, FaHCSIA provides programs and services to increase social and economic participation of people with a disability and their carers. It does this in partnership with other government and non-government agencies.

The Department is currently working with the states and territories to establish the National Disability Strategy, an overarching framework for service delivery to improve support and provide opportunities for people with disabilities and their carers. The Strategy will include the range of services under the National Disability Agreement, whereby the states will receive \$5 billion over five years to assist people with a disability into more sustainable living arrangements and also to support families and carers.

The public hearing will commence at 12.15 pm in Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra. Visitors are welcome to attend, or you can listen to a live webcast at:

<http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>.

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair, Michael Danby MP, on (02) 6277 4520, or the Deputy Chair, Hon Danna Vale MP, on (02) 6277 4866.

For more information and the inquiry terms of reference, visit the inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/disability/index.htm or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560 or jscm@aph.gov.au.