



NSW Council for
Intellectual Disability
& Inclusion Australia

Australian Association of
Developmental Disability Medicine

POSITION STATEMENT ON THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

We call for concerted action to redress the poor health status experienced by people with intellectual disability. We make this call to the Australian, and State and Territory, Governments.

There are over 300,000 people with intellectual disability in Australia. They have very high rates of health problems and these problems are often not diagnosed or appropriately treated. Life expectancy is reduced by up to 20 years.

There are many causes of this situation, ranging across communication barriers between patients and health professionals, complexity of diagnosis, lack of general and specialised skills in the health workforce, and health promotion campaigns and research not focusing on people with intellectual disability.

As well as the **human and financial cost** of poor health for people with intellectual disability and their families, there is considerable financial cost to the health, social security and disability service systems.

Governments need to take action to provide equity in health care for people with intellectual disability. **All health care planning should include specific consideration of how it will meet the needs of people with intellectual disability.**

There also needs to be a national network of health services specialising in the health care of people with intellectual disability. These services would be a consultancy and training resource to the mainstream health system so as to enhance its capacity to meet the needs of people with intellectual disability. The specialised services would facilitate collaboration between local health and disability services and undertake research.

We call on the Australian, and State and Territory, Governments to each and together work to redress the inequity in health care experienced by people with intellectual disability. **In particular, we call on the Governments to establish a national network of intellectual disability health services.**

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ENDORSEMENTS

By 2015, this position statement had been endorsed by:

- 143 eminent individuals,
- 43 national organisations, and
- 182 state/territory and local organisations from around Australia

For example:

National organisations

Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine

Australian Council of Social Service

Carers Australia

National Disability Services

National Rural Health Alliance

People with Disability Australia

Royal Australasian College of Physicians

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Individuals

Michael Kidd AM
Dean of Medicine, Flinders University
Former President, Royal Australian College of
General Practitioners & President,
World Organisation of Family Doctors

Justin Beilby
Dean of Health Sciences, University of Adelaide

Fiona Stanley AC
Director, Telethon Institute for Child Health
Research, Australian of the Year 2003

Bruce Robinson AM
Dean of Medicine, University of Sydney

Kevin Cocks AM
Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Queensland
Human Rights Medallist

Stephen Leeder AO
Director, Menzies Centre for Health Policy

Robert Strike
President, Self Advocacy Sydney
Lifelong Achievement Award, National Disability
Awards 2009

Allan Fels AO
Dean, Australian and New Zealand School of
Government

Dell Stagg,
Parent advocate and President, SA Council on
Intellectual Disability

Jeanette Moss AM
Parent advocate

Ron McCallum AO
Former Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of
Persons with Disabilities & former
Dean of Law, University of Sydney

Ed Byrne AO
Vice Chancellor, Monash University & former
Vice Provost (Health), University College London

Nicholas Saunders
Vice Chancellor, University of Newcastle & former
Chair, National Health & Medical Research Council

Alison Kitson
Head of Nursing
University of Adelaide

Helen McCutcheon
Head of Nursing & Midwifery,
University of South Australia

John Daly
Chair, Global Alliance for Leadership in Nursing
Education & Science, & Former Chair, Council of
Deans of Nursing & Midwifery (Australia & NZ)

Richard Bruggemann
Professorial Fellow in Disability Studies & former
CEO, Intellectual Disability Services Council, SA

Peter Baume AC
Emeritus Professor of Community Medicine &
former Federal Health Minister

SA organisations

Barkuma

Barossa Enterprises

Bedford Group

Health Consumers Alliance

Interwork, Adelaide

Leveda

Orana

SHine (Sexual Health information networking &
education)

SA Council on Intellectual Disability

