

Campaigning to stop Bills bill, has been an eye-opening experience. I am something of a new recruit to disability politics, and the political terrain presents challenges I haven't faced in my other campaigning. In particular just how politically diverse our community is. Reading the lament of comrades who spent hours in the rain campaigning for Labor, how betrayed they must feel to have these austerity measures imposed by the supposedly progressive government. And, as a card-carrying communist, it's a rare site indeed for me to campaign alongside disabled Liberal members. But it makes sense in the end, were not brought together by party affiliation, but because we are all Australians with disabilities who don't want the rug pulled out from under us, the one lifeboat in the ocean sunk.

I'm not, nor have I ever been in The Greens, to be honest I don't think they have me. Repeatedly Bill Shorten has accused the disabled community of fearmongering, and of being extremist, Greens aligned, online trolls. Perhaps this is why he ignored the over 200 submissions to the senate inquiry into the bill, and the calls of a united front from the disability representative organizations (DRO's) and forged ahead with his cuts and power grabs, all just trolls.

It is rich to hear accusations of fearmongering from a government that included sex work, theme park tickets and video game consoles on the out list, in a clear attempt to drum up media controversy. The trick backfired tremendously when advocates and media noticed period products were on the lifestyle products out list.

Lists of course "are nothing new", Bill declares, "there have always been operational guidelines". A half-truth, the most deceitful kind. It implies that people with disabilities who have used the scheme for the past decade do not understand how it works and misleads those who haven't about the purpose of lists in the NDIA.

Eligible supports are defined as those supports that are "reasonable and necessary", and this principles-based approach is expanded upon [here](#). Supports that aren't on operational guidelines, but that meet the reasonable and necessary criteria could be argued for, and if disapproved fought for at the administrative appeals tribunal (AAT). But this new legislation removes that power from the disabled community, and places us firmly at the mercy of bureaucrats.

The lists are not a mere formalisation of existing regulations. Many things that are commonly funded, albeit with considerable advocacy from the participant and their advocates, are either excluded from both the inclusion and exclusions list or included on the exclusions list. To mention one example that is close to my heart, sensory regulating technology were not mentioned by the list at all. This means that noise cancelling headphones, weighted blankets or plushies, and stimulation tools, will presumably not be coverable under the new regime. These tools support Autistic people to regulate their attention, emotions, and sensory experience. It is the difference between being able to access the community and being stuck at home, especially for those of us who must use public transport. It's the difference between being able to manage friendships and work relationships and being left isolated. It's the difference between being able to study or complete tedious activities and being left behind educationally.

Of course as Bill Shorten turns his attention to eligibility, we autistic people have far more to fear, in the loss of all our supports. Being plunged back into a life without dignity, or community. Supports, especially for autistic adults, do not exist outside of the NDIS. And the so called foundational supports the government have demanded the states implement, have focused almost exclusively on services in schools and hospitals for children. We're not just quirky, were struggling, and our struggles don't end when we leave high school.

If it weren't so insidious it would be laughable for Bill Shorten to suggest his reforms have put disabled people back at the centre of the NDIS. He ignored the concerns of over 200

disabled people's submissions to the reform's senate inquiry. He spoke over and down to disabled advocates and contradicts the voices of the DRO's. He slanders us as "fearmongers" and "trolls" in the hope that no one else will listen to us either. His calculated lines, straight from his marketing department, are delivered without the slightest sense of empathy or shame, to paint us as illegitimate representatives of the disabled community.