

Submission
No 27

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF AMBULANCE RAMPING AND
ACCESS BLOCK ON THE OPERATION OF HOSPITAL
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: DEC Housing Limited

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Inquiry into the impact of ambulance ramping and access block on the operation of hospital emergency departments

DEC Housing is specifically focusing on the issue of the unnecessary extended delays in finding an appropriate home for people who do not need acute care in hospital, with or without an NDIS package.

The Federal Minister for the NDIS and Government Services, Bill Shorten, has recently highlighted this problem around Australia noting that “...too many NDIS participants were being “stuck” in hospitals as they waited for accommodation, care packages or home modifications.”

The statistics for NSW are not readily available, but the national estimate is that over 1400 NDIS participants wait an average of 160 days before they are discharged because there is not a suitable home available for them. This will be significantly more if those who either have not yet obtained NDIS support, or are not eligible for NDIS support but still require supported living accommodation.

This extensive delay causes ‘bedlock’ and is expensive with the daily cost of a hospital bed averaging between \$2,000 to \$3,000 per day.

Further, people who do not need acute care are worse off in hospital where the risk of contracting other illnesses is greater, and their access to family support, social networks, and community is limited.

The causes of this ‘bedlock’ and constriction of acute care services are several. First, a lack of ‘medium term’ accommodation near hospitals that will support the individual transitioning to a permanent home. Second, a lack of clear and available statistics on sub-acute care patients who require support in finding a suitable home. Third, a misalignment in the disability housing sector whereby people with disability have limited options and support to find a home that suits their needs, where they want to live. Finally, the delays in processing NDIS applications, and the complexity in navigating the NDIS requirements.

There are clear opportunities to begin to address this problem. However, it is essential to consider the absolute principle of the NDIS is to provide choice and control for people with a disability in making decisions that allow them to live the life they want to lead. This means that when finding a home, the individual must be ‘in the driving seat’ with their aspirations and abilities informing the development their ideal home, in a location that meets their needs. Like anyone, people with disability have the right to secure, accessible and appropriate housing to support the lifestyle they choose. Yet in Australia, most housing options for people with disability fall way short of acceptable standards, and are not available where they want to live but rather where a housing investor gets the most return.

Any initiative that supports people to move out of hospital and into a home must incorporate this principle, and hold individual choice as paramount.

DEC Housing urges the Committee to consider the following initiatives to address this problem:

- Establish suitable on-going accommodation close to hospitals to facilitate transition while a permanent home is developed for people exiting hospital care
- Require collection and publication of data on how many patients remain in hospital primarily because there are no suitable homes for them to be discharged, and the duration of their stay



- Facilitate access by suitable SDA Registered Providers to hospital discharge planners to work with patients to develop suitable home options
- Maintain alignment with the principles of the NDIS ensuring that hospital patients are provided choice and control.

DEC Housing Limited is the only Not-For-Profit registered charity that can provide individualized services and financing options for people with disability, to find the home they want, in the location they want. We are dedicated solely to helping people with disability, and others facing insecure housing, to live in modern custom-built accommodation that empowers their lifestyle and independence.

I thank the Committee for undertaking this work and considering our submission. If the opportunity presents either our Executive Chair Mr Bill Deveney or I would be pleased to present more detail on our proposal.

Andrew Rowe

General Manager