

# Broken System, Breaking Spirits

## how the Disability Support Pension is failing the people that need it most

**Everyone deserves a roof over their head, food on the table and to be able to buy medication if they need it.**

For people living with disability or chronic illness, the Disability Support Pension (DSP) is meant to provide those basic necessities. But over the last decade, it has become more and more difficult for people to access the DSP.

Thousands are now missing out on this safety net that for many has meant the difference between getting by and poverty.

We've acted for many clients over the past ten years who've been negatively impacted by the way the DSP works. It's a broken system. And it's time for the government to make urgent change.

### Treat people fairly

**'It took 16 months to get an appointment with a psychologist. I was given 37 referrals to different psychologists, but there was no availability.'** – Doug

Some medical report requirements in the application process for the DSP do not consider the cost or the limited availability of services – a common barrier for those living in regional or remote areas, like Doug. Unrealistic requirements set people up for failure.

### Be culturally safe

**'The Government funds Aboriginal health services, but then won't trust their evidence – it's a terrible double standard.'** – Dianne

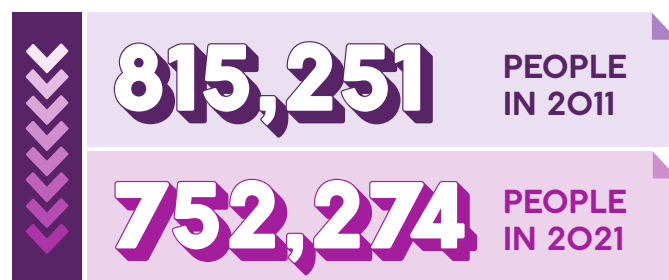
It is harder for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for and access the DSP. The system needs more interpreters and it needs to value the medical evidence provided by Aboriginal health services.

### Remove the Program of Support

**'They said I had to do this program for 18 months before I applied... but I can't work and no program would make that possible. And no one ever told me about the program. I had never even heard about it before.'** – Peter\*

People who don't score more than 20 points on a single Impairment Table must have completed a government work program for 18 months before being eligible for the DSP. About half of all people required to do the Program of Support are rejected.

### Who's on the DSP?



### What is the DSP?

**\$434.15** A WEEK  
MAXIMUM

(less if you earn more than \$90 a week)

To find out more about our ten recommendations to overhaul the DSP, read our submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee [here](#).