

## “Yes Prime Minister!”

This is a show, not only in [theatre](#) , but in every government department as a perspective of the type of bureaucracy which adversely affects the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

Dr Rhonda Galbally, at the National Press Club in Canberra, said, *“What does it mean to be an Australian with a disability? What is life like in the lucky country, in this land of the fair go? One answer we might expect would be, A citizen with the same rights as everyone else!*

*But if you have a physical, sensory, psychiatric, or intellectual disability, what is life really like? Many Australians would say, It's better, isn't it? The bad old days are gone - Aren't they?*

*The horror and abuse that went on in institutions, that's all gone now, hasn't it. The poverty, the discrimination, the exclusion, the fear and hatred, that's all ancient history, isn't it?*

*I would love to be able to say yes, that is all ancient history, but I can't. I'm here to tell you that despite this nation enjoying the longest economic boom in its history, very little has changed for most Australians with a disability”.*

Most of the problems people with disabilities and their families face every day are directly due to the type of bureaucratic bungling depicted in the classic BBC TV series, “Yes Minister!” and, “Yes Prime Minister!”

These shows which appeared on British TV in the 1980s, and which has been a hit stage show in London’s West End for sometime, is now in Australia from the end of January 2012 – ([LINK](#))

The episode which especially depicts the attitude of government departments towards people with disabilities and their families is entitled, “The Compassionate Society”. This is about a new public hospital which had been fully staffed for a long while, but with no patients. When it was suggested, after public outcry, there should be patients, the staff said the hospital was running fine as it was. This is very similar to most public services.

The public service doesn’t need or want customers, as they have a captive market, bulk funding and, therefore, safe employment - Where consumers are considered unnecessary, undesirable, always wrong, and should feel eternally

grateful for anything they might eventually get after long negotiations. Consumers have no rights or entitlement to anything!

When governments decide there is a need for a “social service”, they ‘bulk fund’ a public service department to operate this. The first act of any such department, is to close its doors to the public, install wall to wall staff, bureaucracy and regulations, and make the public fight for everything the department is funded/intended to provide. As they are bulk funded from the government’s general revenue, all staff have safe employment no matter what they do, or don’t do.

The initial government concept is a “charity hand-out’ in itself, but the government department enhances this to develop the traditional public service power-over-people, to ensure consumers know their place. A place where consumers have no rights, must beg for everything, and must never, ever, complain about their captive market, no-choice service.

In total contrast, market-place business opens its doors, welcomes potential customers, and treats customers and potential customers as always right, as the customer has choice of service provider and staff are dependent on customers for their continued employment

This is clearly one of the main reasons the Productivity Commission has taken the ISP (Individual Service Package) track, for the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme).

The ISP is essentially a relatively easy way to reverse the standard public service restrictive practices against consumers. The ISP concept puts the money in the consumer’s pocket, rather than the bureaucratic pocket. Service providers will then have to provide customer satisfaction to stay in business.

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