

## Media Release

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### **Disability boss sceptical over proposed changes to Disability Support Pension**

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“While I do believe there is definitely a need to ensure people receiving government welfare payments are truly eligible, I am nervous about the proposed simplification of the process. To me it doesn’t evoke a sense of reassurance that people with a disability will be treated as individuals, rather they may just be lumped into black and white categories with no room for grey area specific for their situation,” said Muscular Dystrophy Australia’s Executive Director, Boris M Struk.

A report by former Mission Australia chief Patrick McClure to be released today, recommends condensing 20 support payments to just five, and slashing the 55 supplements to just a handful to make the system simpler to administer.

“I am sceptical in that I hope this is not just a money saving venture designed to make reductions in the welfare, specifically disability, sector and I hope the money saved from the dubious claimants will be redistributed to benefit those who truly deserve the assistance,” said Mr Struk.

Muscular Dystrophy is a progressive muscle-destroying disorder with catastrophic consequences, such as loss of mobility and compromised respiratory & cardiac function. This results in the reliance of a wheelchair for mobility, a ventilator to sustain breathing and round the clock carer support.

The report recommends changing the name of the ‘Disability Support Pension’ to the ‘Supported Living Pension’ and enforcing recipients to prove their disability is expected to last for more than five years.

“I would hope that Mr McClure would do more than just recommend in the report that people who receive social security be no worse off under the new system, some sort of guarantee that genuine recipients would not lose current benefits and may even be better off would be more comforting,” said Mr Struk.

**To arrange an interview with Muscular Dystrophy Australia Executive Director, Boris M Struk, please contact:**

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