



Physical Disability AUSTRALIA

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Millions Face Financial Exclusion and Bureaucratic Nightmares as Mobility Barriers Turn Everyday Essentials into Impossible Hurdles

In a nation that prides itself on inclusivity, a hidden crisis is unfolding: Australians with physical disabilities who cannot drive or fly are being systematically excluded from opening bank accounts, accessing government services, and even verifying their identity. With a driver's license or passport often unattainable due to mobility limitations, these individuals are trapped in a cycle of frustration and inequality, according to a new report from Physical Disability Australia due for public release on June 1st.

The report, titled *Barriers Beyond Mobility: The ID Crisis for People with Disabilities*, reveals that over 5.5 million Australians live with disabilities, many of whom cannot obtain standard photo IDs due to chronic pain, limited transport options, or geographic isolation.

This "ID gap" creates insurmountable obstacles in a digital-first world, where anti-money laundering laws demand rigorous verification for banking, and government portals like MyGov require in-person or travel-dependent setups.

"Imagine needing a bank account to receive your disability pension, but being unable to prove who you are because you can't drive to a Service NSW centre or fly for a passport interview," said Suzanne Gearing, CEO of Physical Disability Australia. "This isn't just inconvenience, it's discrimination. People with disabilities are being denied financial independence, access to Centrelink benefits, and even basic information, all because our systems weren't built with them in mind."

Key challenges highlighted in the report include:

- **Banking Barriers:** The 100-point ID system relies heavily on driver's licenses (70 points) or passports, leaving those without them scrambling for alternatives like certified birth certificates, which often require in-person certification at distant locations.
- **Government Service Roadblocks:** Setting up MyGov accounts or applying for NDIS support without these documents demands, at a bare minimum, physical presence, exacerbating isolation for rural residents or those unable to use public transport.
- **Broader Impacts:** Without these ID documents, individuals face delays in healthcare access, employment opportunities, and emergency aid, leading to increased poverty and mental health strain.

The report calls for immediate action, including:

- Expanding digital ID verification options without travel requirements.
- Reforming the 100-point system to prioritise accessible alternatives, such as enhanced Medicare cards or video-based certifications.

Disability advocate Dr George Taleporos shared his concerns, "People with disability are once again being shut out by government systems that are built around able-bodied assumptions. Requiring a passport or driver licence to access essential identity checks ignores the reality that many of us cannot drive, do not fly, or do not have those documents. This is not a minor administrative problem. It is a serious access and equity failure that affects all areas of our lives. The government must make this verification system accessible and inclusive to people with disability."



George Taleporos is concerned that the government's verification systems do not consider accessibility and equity for Australia's disability community.

The following individual is available for interviews:

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Further photos available on request

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About us:

Physical Disability Australia (PDA) is a national non-profit organisation dedicated to advocating for the rights of people with physical disabilities. Through research, policy reform, and community support, we work to dismantle barriers and promote true inclusion across all sectors of Australian society. For more information, visit www.pda.org.au.

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