

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Private health insurers want to do more help reduce cost pressures on families with permanently disabled dependants**

The peak body for community based private health insurers, hirmaa, has today called for reform to help reduce cost pressures on families with disabled dependants.

According to Matthew Koce, CEO of hirmaa, present legislation prevents private health insurers from providing family extension cover to permanently disabled dependants aged 25 or over. hirmaa would like to see that changed to allow insurers the discretion to grant a family extension policy to permanently disabled dependants, regardless of their age.

“Individual private health cover is generally more expensive than a family extension policy and as such, there is a strong case for reform.”

“Given that families caring for disabled children often experience significant financial pressures, the limited nature of the disability support pension and the fact that parents with a child over the age of 25 are ageing and possibly retired, individual private health cover is an added expense that many struggle to afford.”

“Indeed, Australia ranks 27 out of 27 OECD countries for people with disability living in or near poverty (45% compared to 22% average).”

“Mandating that private health insurers cut disabled dependants off from family extension policies once they turn 25 makes no sense. They will still be dependent on the loving care of their families long after turning 25 and the community based hirmaa funds want to be there to help.”

“Allowing private health insurers greater flexibility and discretion to provide family cover for the permanently disabled could reduce cost pressures on mums and dads and change lives for the better, without costing the Government a single cent.”

“hirmaa funds exist only to support their members, not shareholders. We are eager to assist people with a disability by supporting reforms that will make private health insurance more affordable and accessible.”

A listing of all hirmaa member funds can be found at, [www.hirmaa.com.au/member\\_funds](http://www.hirmaa.com.au/member_funds)

9 December, 2014

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