



Open letter to The Hon. Brad Hazzard, Minister for Health NSW

Dear Minister,

We write to urge you to take strong action to address the physical and mental health inequalities experienced by people with intellectual disability. These inequalities are long-standing but the urgency of action has been reinforced by the recent research showing that, in NSW, 38% of deaths of people with intellectual disability were potentially avoidable. This is over double the rate for the general population. (Trollor 2017)

Concerted action is needed to lift the capacity of the health system to provide accessible and appropriate health care to people with intellectual disability of all ages and in all parts of NSW.

As a clear priority, people with intellectual disability and complex physical or mental health conditions need Statewide access to healthcare professionals with specialised skills in their health care needs. Just as we have specialists in a range of specific and often complex needs, for example paediatrics and geriatrics, so we need specialists in the health care of people with intellectual disability.

We applaud that, some years ago, the Government funded three pilot multidisciplinary intellectual disability health teams in Northern Sydney, the Illawarra/Shoalhaven and Southwest Sydney. These teams can back up the mainstream health care system through expert consultancy in particular cases and as drivers of education and other capacity building across Local Health Districts.

Now, we urge you to establish access to such teams on a Statewide basis.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Leeder AO
Emeritus Professor, Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Sydney
Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of Epidemiology

Eileen Baldry
Deputy Vice Chancellor Inclusion and Diversity
Professor of Criminology, UNSW

Allan Fels AO
Former Chair, National Mental Health Commission

Dr Catherine Yelland PSM
President, Royal Australasian College of Physicians

Dr Kym Jenkins
President, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

Associate Professor Charlotte Hespe
Vice-President, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
Chair RACGP NSW

Kim Oates AM
Emeritus Professor, University of Sydney
Former CEO of Children's Hospital at Westmead

Leslie White AM
Emeritus Professor of Paediatrics, UNSW Sydney
Visiting Professor, Macquarie University, Australian Institute of Health Innovation
Former NSW Chief Paediatrician and Executive Director Sydney Children's Hospital

Professor Michael Kidd AM
Past president, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
Past President, World Organization of Family Doctors

Alison Jones
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Health and Communities) and
Executive Dean, Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health, University of Wollongong

Professor John Daly
Dean of Health, University of Technology Sydney
Head, WHO UTS Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery & Health Development

Ian Webster AO
Physician
Emeritus Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine, UNSW

Patrick McGorry AO
Director, Orygen National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health
Professor of Youth Mental Health, University of Melbourne

John Dwyer AO
Emeritus Professor of Medicine UNSW
President, Friends of Science in Medicine
Founder, Australian Healthcare Reform Alliance

Eric Emerson
Professor in Disability Population Health, University of Sydney
Emeritus Professor of Disability and Health Research, Lancaster University

Professor Karen Fisher
Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW

Professor Leanne Dowse
Chair, Intellectual Disability Behaviour Support, UNSW

Scientia Professor Helen Christensen
Director and Chief Scientist, Black Dog Institute

Professor Julian Trollor
Director, Department of Developmental Neuropsychiatry UNSW

Dr Gary Galambos
Chair, NSW Branch Committee, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

Professor Anthony Kelleher
Acting Dean of Medicine, UNSW

Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn
Director, Centre for Disability Research and Policy, University of Sydney
Head, WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Workforce Development in Rehabilitation and Long
Term Care

Jacqueline Small
Developmental Paediatrician
President, Australian Association of Developmental Disability Medicine

Associate Professor Gehan Roberts
Developmental-Behavioural Paediatrician
President, Neurodevelopmental and Behavioural Paediatric Society of Australasia

Laura Hogan
President, Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability

Dr Linda Goddard
President, Professional Association of Nurses in Developmental Disabilities Australia (PANDDA)
Adjunct Senior Lecturer, Charles Sturt University

Gordon Parker AO
Scientia Professor of Psychiatry, UNSW

Henry Brodaty AO
Scientia Professor of Ageing and Mental Health, UNSW

Stewart Einfeld
Professor of Mental Health, University of Sydney
Senior Scientist, Brain and Mind Research Institute

Professor Bronwyn Hemsley,
Chair of Speech Pathology, University of Technology Sydney

Patricia O'Brien
Director, Centre for Disability Studies
Professor of Disability Studies, Sydney Medical School

Philip Mitchell AM,
Scientia Professor and Head of School, UNSW Psychiatry

Maria Tomasic
Past President, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

Phil Foreman AM
Emeritus Professor and former Dean of Education, University of Newcastle

Trevor Parmenter AM
Professor Emeritus, Sydney Medical School
Past President, International Association for the Study of Intellectual Disability

Susan Hayes AO
Professor Emeritus, Sydney Medical School

Associate Professor Sally Robinson
Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University

Roger Stancliffe
Professor of Intellectual Disability, Centre for Disability Research and Policy, University of Sydney.
Past Editor, Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability

Liz Marles
Past President, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Professor Nick Lennox
Past President, Australian Association of Intellectual Disability Medicine
Director, Queensland Centre on Intellectual and Developmental Disability

Dr Helen Beange AM
Founder, Developmental Disability Health Unit

Professor Kelley Johnson
Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW

Rosemary Kayess
Director, Disability Innovation Institute, UNSW

Sharon Friel
Director and Professor of Health Equity and
Director, Menzies Centre for Health Policy, Australian National University

Professor Michael Arthur-Kelly
School of Education University of Newcastle

Iva Strnadová
Associate Professor of Special Education, UNSW

Roger West
Former President, Guardianship Tribunal NSW
Former Community Services Commissioner NSW

Nick O'Neill
Former President, Guardianship Tribunal NSW

Diane Robinson
Former President, Guardianship Tribunal NSW

Andrew Cashin
Professor of Nursing, Southern Cross University

Perminder Sachdev
Scientia Professor for Neuropsychiatry and
Co-Director, Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing, UNSW

Professor Carla Treloar
Director
Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW

Emeritus Professor Robert Conway
Former Dean of Education, Flinders University
Former Director, Special Education Centre, University of Newcastle

Helen Creasey AM
Geriatrician

David Dossetor
Clinical Associate Professor, University of Sydney

Associate Professor Joanne Arciuli
Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney

Signatories as at 4 March 2018

Contacts

Jim Simpson, Senior Advocate, Council for Intellectual Disability
jim@nswcid.org.au 0418 635630

Professor Julian Trollor, Director, Department of Developmental Neuropsychiatry UNSW
j.trollor@unsw.edu.au 9931 9160