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**MEDIA RELEASE: Life Without Barriers supports calls to improve health services for people with intellectual disability**

Major disability services provider Life Without Barriers has lent its support to the Council for Intellectual Disability's [calls to the Federal Government to make all health services accessible and responsive to people with intellectual disability](#).

The Council for Intellectual Disability released the Health of People with Intellectual Disability Budget and Federal Election 2019 and has outlined a number of measures which need to occur.

Life Without Barriers Chief Executive Claire Robbs said, "We urge the Federal Government to heed the Council for Intellectual Disability's call to improve health outcomes for people with intellectual disability.

"As a major provider of services to people with intellectual disability, including operating a number of group homes, we have seen first-hand the challenge that people with intellectual disability have in accessing the health system and the enormous inequality in health outcomes they experience.

"Many of the residents of our group homes have significant barriers to communicating with medical staff about their health issues, which means they may not get the treatment they need. Conversely, if medical staff cannot sufficiently communicate with a person with intellectual disability, then they will not understand what is happening to them or what they are being asked to do.

"People with intellectual disability may also exhibit complex behaviours, particularly if they are distressed or in pain, which can be misunderstood or not taken seriously by medical staff.

"There are many excellent medical and health staff we work with, although we have found that some have limited knowledge of the complex health needs of people with intellectual disability. Also, relevant information can end up getting lost, or not communicated between one medical professional and the next."

The Council for Intellectual Disability has recommended that training is provided to current medical professionals in each Primary Health Network, and that it is added to the curriculum in medical and nursing schools.

"We support these recommendations. We all have a right to the best health care available – and it is not good enough that people with intellectual disability are not getting this," Ms Robbs said.

More information is available from the [Council for Intellectual Disability website](#)

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**About Life Without Barriers:** Life Without Barriers (LWB) is one of Australia's largest not-for-profit social purpose organisations, delivering innovative, community-based programs to more than 18,000 people from diverse community groups across the country. LWB works in more than 440 communities delivering services in family support, disability, out-of-home care, aged care, mental health, youth justice, homelessness, substance abuse, and provides support for refugees and asylum seekers.