

# DIAMOND VALLEY LEADER

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## Watsonia carers hope for peace of mind

by Dave Crossthwaite



Tony Tregale and his wife Heather of Watsonia are disability advocates and are joining the push for a national insurance scheme.

Watsonia-based disability advocates hope a national insurance scheme will provide choice for families and carers searching for supported housing.

Tony Tregale, spokesman for advocacy group Lifestyle in Supported Accommodation (LISA) Inc, has long campaigned for the rights of people living with severe disabilities.

His son Paul, 35, who has autism and an intellectual disability, has lived in supported accommodation for 14 years.

Mr Tregale, 74, said he and his wife Heather, 70, had battled constantly with the Department of Human Services to ensure their son received “quality-of-life care”.

“So many parents tell us they are scared to approach staff with concerns and feel as though they have to beg for service and that they are somehow at fault for having a child with a disability,” Mr Tregale said.

“Hopefully a national insurance scheme will attract more services and provide choice for families.”

“Families should be supported to be primary carers for as long as they can or wish to be, but no-one lives forever.

“Hopefully an NDIS would secure a person’s right for the services they need for their entire life, with each person funded to a level to suit their individual needs.

“A guaranteed right to quality-of-life care will give parents the peace of mind that their child will be cared for after they are gone.”

## **Scope backs campaign**

One of Victoria’s major disability support groups has joined the campaign to introduce a national disability insurance scheme.

Scope, which provides disability support services for Victorians of all ages, has lent its voice to the growing national campaign for disability insurance.

The campaign calls for a no-fault insurance scheme that would provide people with disabilities with funding for care, support, therapy and equipment. It would provide support for family and carers of the disabled and overturn existing inequities, such as different levels of financial support calculated on how, when and where a disability was acquired.

Scope CEO Diana Heggie said the scheme would provide assistance to all people with a significant disability, no matter how their disability was acquired.

Ms Heggie said a Productivity Commission draft report, released on February 28 with recommendations that a national scheme begin in 2014, “looks like the solution to the problems we have”.

“This is the first in-depth report that recognises the under-met and un-met needs that exist in Australia,” she said. “There are families right across the country that should be delighted with this report.”

The campaign gained momentum after the launch of the national website - [everyaustraliancounts.com.au](http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au) - on Australia Day.

The campaign’s national director, John Della Bosca, said the the disability insurance scheme was vital to Australia’s future prosperity.

“All too often the stories of people with a disability are ignored or forgotten,” he said. “This site will allow people to have their voices heard and their stories told.”

The commission is expected to release its final report in July.

More details available at: [scopevic.org.au](http://scopevic.org.au) or [everyaustraliancounts.com.au](http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au)