



PARENTS OF VISION IMPAIRED (NZ) INC

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Providing a community to support parents of children with vision impairments

19 February 2021

Tēnā koutou,

Please find attached a submission from Parents of Vision Impaired NZ Inc., on the Social Security (Financial Assistance for Caregivers) Amendment Bill.

Ngā mihi,

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Parents of Vision Impaired NZ Inc.

Parents of Vision Impaired NZ Inc (PVI) is a registered charity which supports parents who have blind, low vision, or vision-impaired children. There is no cost to enrol and we provide a supportive community of parents who are overcoming challenges every day. Our current membership is at just over 1300 active members, with close to 800 email subscribers.

PVI offers parents advice, information, and opportunities to meet other parents. We publish a quarterly newsletter (eVision) and have a members-only Facebook page for families and whānau to share information and to network. PVI also runs an annual conference and AGM which allows parents and whānau to get together face to face for a longer time to talk, listen and learn in a social setting.

Additionally, PVI takes an active part in the disability sector through making sure that the voice of visually impaired children and their parents is heard in consultations with government, schools, local councils, and other organisations.

Submission on the Social Security (Financial Assistance for Caregivers) Amendment Bill.

PVI is in support of amending the Social Security Act 2018 in order to implement two (2) initiatives that improve financial assistance for caregivers that receive the orphan's benefit and unsupported child's benefit.

Specifically, PVI supports extending eligibility for the orphans benefit and the unsupported child's benefit to caregivers who may provide care for less than 12 months. PVI also supports extending the Christmas and birthday allowances to caregivers receiving the orphans benefit and the unsupported child's benefit at the same rates as those received by caregivers receiving the foster care allowance.

PVI is aware of the intersection of disability and (unpaid) caregiving work; we have members who provide care for their vision impaired grandchild and/or other whānau members. PVI is also aware of the intersection between disability and poverty. We draw the reader's attention to one of the findings from the CCS Disability Action *State of wellbeing and equality for disabled people, their families, and whānau* report, which noted that disabled children are between 1.4 and 1.6 times more likely to be below all three poverty thresholds than households that only had non-disabled children. PVI is also aware that the intersection of disability, caregiving work, and poverty requires addressing across multiple areas.

Therefore PVI supports the Social Security Amendment Bill as PVI believes that this Bill will work to address current discrepancies in caregiving work, and will be of direct downstream benefit to children and caregivers.