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**MORE SUPPORT NEEDED FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR CARERS**

AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said today that the tragic circumstances of Anita Cain and her son, Niall – and the similar experiences of other parents and carers of disabled people – highlight the urgent need for a system that provides greater support and services for people with disabilities and their carers.

As reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Anita Cain is a single mother who was forced to abandon her severely disabled son at a respite centre because, after 15 years, she could no longer cope with the demands of his care.

Dr Pesce said that Australia, as a prosperous and compassionate nation, must take steps to allow people with serious disabilities to have the proper support and care they need to provide the best possible quality of life for them and for their carers.

“As a community, we need to find ways to help these people,” Dr Pesce said.

“People with disabilities should not have to rely on limited disability services, their ability to win a court case, or the selflessness of their loved ones.

“The AMA has for some years proposed a long term care scheme – or national disability insurance scheme – to provide for personal care for people with serious disabilities.

“The scheme would be ‘no fault’ and would provide personal care and support for people with disabilities.

“It would be comprehensive in its coverage of the range of serious, permanent disabilities regardless of their cause, and it would be based on need.

“But governments should not be put off or delayed by the magnitude of such a scheme – it is the right and proper thing to do.

“Properly done, it would build on and improve the existing piecemeal approach, which is currently leaving so many families like the Cain family without appropriate support.

“It is time to take the first steps in providing proper support and services for the long term care needs of people with serious disabilities in our community,” Dr Pesce said.

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