



Disability Support Pension Impairment Tables – consultation on proposed changes

The Australian Department of Social Services sought feedback on the draft Impairment Tables. The Impairment Tables are used to assess whether a person meets the general medical rules to receive the Disability Support Pension. Cancer Council Australia and the Oncology Social Work Australia and New Zealand reviewed the proposed changes and made a joint submission to this consultation.

Our submission acknowledged three key inclusions in the Impairment Tables. These are:

- Removal of the term ‘fully diagnosed, treated and stabilised’ and replaced with ‘diagnosed, reasonably treated and stabilised’ and removal of the term ‘permanent condition’. We believe this improvement to the terminology for applying the Impairment Tables will increase access for people with cancer undergoing treatment and to access the most appropriate treatment for their conditions. There are many treatment options for cancer, and sometimes these change for an individual during the course of their cancer care.
- Chemotherapy listed as an example of a side effect of treatments. Listing chemotherapy as an example is useful in assisting assessors to think about the impacts of anti-cancer treatments. Our submission recommended additionally listing immunotherapy given the side effect profile and impact to function differs from chemotherapy.
- The expansion of health practitioners who can contribute evidence to an application is welcomed given the multi-faceted and varied impact of cancer on individuals.

Our submission also requested consideration given to training of both Disability Support Pension assessors and doctors on the application of the Impairment Tables as it relates to cancer. This would help to ensure consistent and equitable application to individual cases. Where this is not clear, assessors should be enabled to cross reference with health professionals to understand the context in which the application has been made. Having the right information and evidence to make the correct determination early is important for access to income support.

Information about the progress of the consultation, can be found on the consultation’s [webpage](#).