

The Hon. Michael D. Kirby AC CMG

8 February 2021

REFERENCE *MS LYNN RUSSELL*

I have known Lynn Russell for more than 30 years. I first met her when I was involved in issues concerning rights of the Tibetan people. Since then, she has switched most of her civil society activity into working for Australians who suffer from invisible disabilities. She is the Chief Executive of Invisible Disabilities Australia (IDA). She estimates that there are 5 million fellow citizens who need recognition and have special problems that are not always obvious; but are deeply felt and greatly affecting.

One area with which I have lately become involved concerns prostate enlargement and illnesses. These present classical invisible disabilities. Men with prostate enlargement often need access to toilets and sometimes on very short notice. This is a profoundly difficult and embarrassing condition. Yet it needs (with so many invisible disabilities) representatives and spokespeople who can explain, detail and support their needs.

This is why, increasingly in public transport and elsewhere in Australia, one sees notifications that a person may have a disability, although it is invisible.

I strongly support the initiatives that IDA have taken. I praise Lynn Russell for expanding her horizons of service to others. From Tibetan self-determination to invisible disabilities is a big leap. However, the common element is love and respect for fellow human beings, their dignity and rights.

I support the work that Lynn Russell undertakes. I hope you will do likewise.

Sincerely,

