

Forced out of NDIS-funded home and living in hospital with a disability, para-athlete waits for new home

ABC Gold Coast / By [Mackenzie Colahan](#)

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Amy says she would be living on the street or in her van if she had been discharged from Robina Hospital. *(Supplied)*

Amy Tobin is not sick but she is living in a hospital ward.

The 29-year-old para-athlete was forced out of her NDIS-funded home because she did not want to share it with strangers.

Ms Tobin was admitted to Robina Hospital on November 13 after dislocating her wrist in a fall.

But despite being medically cleared the next day, doctors would not discharge her because she had nowhere else to go.

She is classed as a social admission, a colloquial term used to describe a patient who no longer has any acute medical issues, but who health professionals determine cannot be safely released into the community.

It is a last resort but Ms Tobin is grateful to be there.

Key points:

- Amy is living in a Gold Coast public hospital after she was forced out of her NDIS home
- The 29-year-old has been unable to find an accessible property during the housing crisis
- She has been given a \$146/night budget for crisis accommodation during Christmas school holidays



ny is a social admission meaning she's healthy but doctors think it's not safe to release her. (ABC Gold Coast: Mackenzie lahan)

She was born with cerebral palsy, uses a wheelchair and requires around-the-clock assistance with everyday tasks like preparing meals and bathing.

ABC News revealed in October she was given a notice to vacate the specialist disability accommodation property she had lived in alone for 18 months.

Despite assurances that she would have the three-bedroom house to herself when she moved in, the housing provider backflipped on their agreement when the National Disability Insurance Agency began cracking down on providers that were claiming their NDIS participants' entire housing budget to allow them to live in a house as a sole occupant.

The policy designed to protect vulnerable Australians from being overcharged had the unintended consequence of forcing people who lived alone out of their homes during a housing crisis.

Ms Tobin is now homeless and said she would be living on the street had the hospital discharged her sooner.

"I have a wheelchair-accessible van but it's not really feasible with my support needs for me to live in," she said.



; Tobin says there are no suitable wheelchair-accessible properties available on the Gold Coast. *(Supplied)*

"It's pretty tough being in hospital at the best of times but when you're not sick it's rough, just waiting day by day."

A spokesperson for the NDIA said it was working closely with Ms Tobin to ensure she was receiving the help she needed.

"A health liaison officer is supporting Amy and liaising with hospital staff to ensure a coordinated approach for discharge as soon as possible," the spokesperson said.

"Amy is eligible for specialist disability accommodation and has funding to assist her to find a suitable place to live."

No 'sense of urgency'

After looking at more than 60 specialist disability accommodation options on the Gold Coast, only one has been deemed suitable for Ms Tobin, who requires a property that is purpose-built for someone with high physical support needs.

Her support coordinator, Fiona Lawton, said that property — an apartment in Broadbeach — was leased to someone else hours before the NDIA approved Ms Tobin's updated funding plan.

It took the agency four months to process the new funding plan.



ona Lawton is Amy's NDIS support coordinator and is managing her housing applications. *(ABC News: Lucas Hill)*

While she acknowledged the NDIA had a difficult job to do, Ms Lawton said the system had let Ms Tobin down.

"I don't know why there wasn't a sense of urgency," Ms Lawton said.

"Amy feels that she is being punished and I can see how she could feel that way."

On Wednesday Ms Tobin was approved for 180 days of crisis accommodation funding through the NDIS with a budget of \$146 per night.

The challenge now is finding a wheelchair accessible hotel room in that price range on the Gold Coast during the Christmas school holidays.



: Tobin is concerned that her time in the hospital is running out. (*Supplied*)

"The agency knows we are in a housing crisis and a cost-of-living crisis and we have someone who is on a disability support pension who at every turn is being told that she needs to fund any out-of-pocket expenses associated with her medium-term accommodation," Ms Lawton said.

"I am shocked and stunned that in 2023 we are still seeing very, very clunky applications of government policy for people with disability."



e hallway of the hospital's Specialist Medical Unit where Amy is living. *(Supplied)*

Ms Tobin is concerned that her time is running out.

Patients in Queensland public hospitals are only entitled to 35 days of free treatment.

If doctors determine their condition is "non-acute" they are then charged a daily rate of \$74.

Her \$400 per week disability support pension would not be able to cover the cost.

"It has been a huge financial stress as well," Ms Tobin said.

"I'm counting down the days with no destination yet but hopefully we find one soon."