



"MEDIA RELEASE"
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"HOWARD / BROUGH LOOK ORDINARY" Every way you look at it?

The Brough "howler" in Melbourne yesterday as reported in today's Melbourne Age (see below) where by the Minister told disability carers " he was sympathetic to people who choose to do what you do" demands Mr. Howards urgent intervention. Former Federal Liberal Disability Minister John Cobb was sacked after he allegedly told advocates " He would stick a disabled child in a home" (Oct 2006) reflecting an insensitive trend with Federal Ministers.

Mr. Brough, who despite being asked ten weeks ago to pick **any day, any time** before the election to attend a public disability meeting in Adelaide (with over 500 expected to attend) which would be scheduled to fully suit him advised last Friday he was too busy which has seriously angered many in the SA Disability community.

Brough has struggled with this portfolio since the start of CSTDA negotiations and continually looks insensitive, arrogant and out of touch. Walk outs, policy back flips and reversals have not gone down well.

The ALP/ Labor Disability policy released yesterday suggests the ALP at this stage of the election campaign is more switched on to the national disability crisis than the Howard / Brough Liberals.

It was however very disappointing not to see Kevin Rudd speaking from the heart on this disability policy at the ALP announcement.

We do note below that Mr. Brough has hinted at more Disability/ Carer policy announcements to come, a comment incidentally also made Monday by local Federal Minister Christopher Pyne in discussions with D4D re Boothby and Sturt marginal electorates where D4D is campaigning hard. The Liberals can hardly be surprised at the Melbourne meeting that the increased carers allowance which takes carer support from 34 cents per hour to 39 cents per hour for providing 24/7 care for decades was treated with the disdain such an uncompassionate policy deserves.

The ALP policy announced yesterday outpoints the Liberals by

- **Matching the Liberal policy**
- **Putting the \$962 million funding back into CSTDA which is clearly necessary**
- **Firmly believing they can get dollar for dollar additional agreement from the states to match this \$962 ALP commitment over the next 5 years**
- **Matching the Liberal Autism support plan and adding 6 new early intervention centres including one in Adelaide.**
- **The ALP having already supported the additional social security \$1000 payment to carers of disabled children under 16**
- **There is little doubt Jan McLucas and Annette Elliss have a much better grasp of the Disability crisis given they were pivotal in launching the Senate inquiry into CSTDA that reported in Feb 07**

D4D will watch with interest to see if SA Premier Mike Rann publicly supports this ALP policy direction. Mr. Rann is nationally ridiculed for his lack of support in the last 6 years and at times the SA habit of moving disability funding within the department for max publicity rather than increasing the appalling shortfall of funding in SA.

After 11 years like in other opinion polls Mr. Howard appears to be trailing on disability support. D4D will watch with much interest to see what else the Liberals have in their plans

Finding some genuine compassion and understanding would be a good start!

FROM THE MELBOURNE AGE TODAY

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/federalection2007news/insulted-carers-jeer-brough/2007/10/30/1193618865325.html> <<http://www.theage.com.au/news/federalection2007news/insulted-carers-jeer-brough/2007/10/30/1193618865325.html>>

Family and Community Services Minister Mal Brough has received a frosty reception from carers at a forum in Melbourne, with some labelling the government's recent \$500 utilities allowance for carers an "insult".

At one stage during the forum, hosted by the Association for Carers of Children with a Disability, he heard an emotional account from a woman who cares for both her husband and two children with serious disabilities.

Mr. Brough began his response by saying he was sympathetic to people who "choose to do what you do".

He attempted to correct himself but was angrily jeered by the crowd, with one member of the yelling out "we don't choose, we have to".

The forum saw representatives from Labor, the Democrats, the Greens and Carers Alliance, as well as the Coalition, outline their policies on the disabled and carers going into the election.

Other members of the forum branded the \$500 utility payment for carers and pensioners announced last week as an "insult", amounting to \$10 a week.

Greens representative Senator Rachel Siewert was loudly applauded when she attacked the Government's \$34 billion tax package, arguing more should be provided for carers and the disabled.

But Labor was also attacked for failing to provide a carers' policy four weeks out from the election.

When asked by an audience member when the ALP would produce its policy for carers and the disabled, Labor MP Annette Ellis replied: "I don't know".

'Joy', who cares for three family members, told the forum she appreciated Mr. Brough presence but thought the Government needed to put more money towards accommodation for young people with a disability and increase the carers allowance.

"The carers allowance is totally inadequate, this is a full time job. And the \$500 utilities payment is an absolute insult."

However, she said she was also disappointed by Labor's lack of policy on the issue.

"The Labor Party should be very embarrassed to be here today without a policy for carers and the disabled," she said.

Mr. Brough also hinted a further policy announcement for carers and the disabled during the campaign.

When asked what type of policies these would be he said "good ones".

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