



"MEDIA RELEASE"
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"Warning!"

Do the Liberal Numbers Stack Up?

Trust is the major theme of the SA 2010 State Election

Who do South Australians trust to address the issues facing South Australians a key theme of the 2010 State Election?

That is the big question? Disability Speaks will be reviewing all parties 2010 policies over the next few weeks!

At the public meeting on Feb 17th Disability Speaks released its key demands for the 2010 election!

Firmly based on the Australian Productivity Commission Jan 2010 report which showed SA spends more than \$30 million dollars per annum less than the national per capita average (and \$115 million less per annum on a per client basis) Disability speaks is demanding whoever is in government after March 20th must commit to meeting at least the national per capita funding average.

Disability Speaks demanded over the next four years that all parties should commit to

- An additional \$30 million dollars be committed for In home support / care
- An additional \$30 million dollars be committed for crisis care/ respite and support
- An additional \$30 million dollars be committed for 300 additional supported accommodation programs
- An additional \$30 million dollars be committed for Innovative and Flexible new programs including self managed funding, individualised funding and needs assessment programs.
- A revamp of the education system with a strong commitment to disability support

At these funding levels SA will still be well under the national per capita average! But it would be a desperately needed step in the right direction.

The ALP looked for popularity gains in December with a crisis management commitment of \$31 million over the next 4 years for 250 families. This is not new money. It is money to be spent that has been committed in previous budgets

The Liberal party announcements of its disability policy so far for 2010 were announced last week!

The Liberals have garnished the forward estimates funds and added just \$2.5 million per year which is not much for a sector in desperate crisis.

Key Liberal election promises need urgent clarification if the Liberals wish to win the trust of the SA disability community,

- It is agreed there is already \$31k in the forward estimates (some of which is in this financial year and already spent even before Election Day? guess \$7 million?)
- This is not a new funding commitment by the Liberals
- Thus the contribution of the Liberal party over and above what the ALP has budgeted is just \$2.5 million extra p.a.
- The ALP claimed in December its forward estimate funds will support 250 families in crisis over the next 4 years.
- The Liberals claim with just \$10mill extra over the same period they will clear the unmet need for 618 category one / critical crisis clients
- Disability Speaks simply does not understand how you can possibly service/get from 250 families to 618 families on \$2.5 million per annum extra
- The latest June 30th 2009 unmet need waiting lists are attached. In category one/ accommodation alone 238 clients were listed as awaiting accommodation. This cost alone equates too, 32 basic beds @ \$20k per annum = \$0.640K, 128 moderate @ \$50k p.a. = \$6.40 m, 72 high @\$120k p.a. = \$8.64 mill, 6 intensive @ \$150k = \$0.9 mill

Total per annum expenditure is thus \$16.58m (over budget by \$6.58 m p.a) or short \$30 mill over 4 years plus the \$7 mill already spent plus with 380 other category one clients still in need of a plethora of other services including respite and in home care?

We think the Liberals are short on commitments by \$40-\$50 mill over the next four years as a minimum? Sadly the MAJOR Liberal Disability policy released Feb 17th labelled "A vision for disability" appears possibly a mirage? The Liberal policy seems formulated around the desire by 10-20% of DSA service users seeking self managed/ individualised funding with the key Liberal outcome questionably being not the personal decision making control that is the basis of SFM but the almost irrational belief that SMF will deliver huge deflation in service costs. The Liberal policy appears based on major efficiency savings being realized in the sector? This would then absolve the Liberal Party from the need to provide appropriate funding. Questions the Liberals need to answer include

- Given the majority of DSA clients will not embrace SMF. How then do such efficiency benefits be realised?
- Given the bulk of carers do not want the stress of additional responsibility shifted onto families already battling for survival in organizing their own services as such an approach does not provide a long term solution to services and John Howards failed "cheque in the mail" federal approach to disability support is still fresh in the minds of many are the SA Liberals heading this way?
- Given the Liberals are probably operating on the false assumption that there are massive efficiency gains to be had in the sector either by DSA or clients handling funds direct despite the SA disability system being systematically and chronically underfunded for two decades (at the lowest funding levels in the commonwealth) with a string of Ministers from both sides hammering efficiency, what gains do the Liberals believe remain accessible.

- Given some DSA clients if they receive a SMF cheque will prefer too or have no option but too buy services from the same NGO operators as DSA does today at the same cost how will this stretch funding?
- How will the Liberal party fund its equipment list promises which are not included in the above costings?
- Why is Liberal Party 2010 proposal substantially less than the SA Liberal 2006 disability policy? Do the Liberals really think things have got better in the disability sector?
- If the Liberals think better service is going to come from stretching the disability dollar further should they not declare this is their major plan and the efficiency cuts they will be targeting?
- How will the Liberals fund their new Autism school?

The Liberal "Vision for Disability" is a major major disappointment! One pizza for 500 people does not work regardless of whether it is sliced by DSA or SMF clients. The addition of "just a single olive to the pie" by opposition leader Redmond is a shock! While some disability theorists in the SA community may initially get excited at the overdue "personal philosophical approach" of the Liberal rhetoric the lack of appropriate resources will compromise the potential success of such initiatives? The long term effects could be considerably worse. Like the failed deinstitutionalization approach of the 80s the Liberals appears to embrace a new philosophy and may then fail to provide the essential support!

The Liberal party needs to urgently recheck its finance numbers and clarify its intent and support around SMF. Is SMF about decision making and better service or is it cost cutting by stealth. "Trust us" on this one? The Liberal Party has a lot of explaining to do re its disability policy if it wants the disability sector trust and the 6.2% voter swing it needs to be in power!

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