



"MEDIA RELEASE"

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"A Policy Free Zone?"

Trust has become the major theme of the SA 2010 State Election.

Who do South Australians trust to address the issues facing people with disabilities in South Australia? This is the big question.

Disability Speaks will be reviewing all parties' 2010 policies over the next few weeks!

With just 17 days to go until Election Day, it is disappointing that we are yet to see all the major party policies.

The Australian Productivity Commission January 2010 report showed that SA spends \$30 million dollars per annum less than the national per capita average (and \$115 million less per annum on a per client basis).

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

Disability speaks is demanding that whoever is in government after March 20th must commit to meeting at least the national per capita funding average.

Disability Speaks demanded that, over the next four years, 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 places;
- An additional \$30 million dollars be committed for Innovative and Flexible new programs including self managed funding and needs assessment programs; and
- A revamp of the education system with a strong commitment to disability support.

Even 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 early popularity gains in December with an announcement of 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 ALP is yet to release its 2010 policy and additional commitments, which is disappointing.

At the Disability Speaks Public Meeting on Feb 17th, Disability Minister Jennifer Rankine (ALP) said "Watch this space".

And we are still watching and watching and watching and watching!

The Liberal Disability Policy was announced at the Disability Speaks Public Meeting.

It is well targeted and embraces a number of strong initiatives that are long overdue including Self Managed Funding.

But the Liberals have garnished the forward estimates funds but added just \$2.5 million per year?

Key Liberal election promises need clarification if the Liberals wish to win the confidence of the SA disability community.

- The concept of a super school for children with Autism Spectrum is going to be very well received, even without the funding attached.
- It is agreed by all that there is already \$31million in the forward estimates (some of which will already be spent before Election Day). This is not a new funding commitment by the Liberals
- The contribution of the Liberal party over and above what has been budgeted is just \$2.5 million extra p.a.
- The ALP claimed its forward estimate funds will support 250 families in crisis over the next 4 years. The Liberals claim with the \$10million extra over the same 4 year period they will clear the unmet need of 618 category one/critical crisis clients.
- Disability Speaks questions how you get services from 250 families to 618 families on just \$2.5 million per annum extra!

In the latest June 30th 2009 Unmet Need waiting lists, in category one/ alone, 238 clients were listed as awaiting accommodation.

Even with conservative cost assumptions, Disability Speaks estimates these costs alone at over \$16 million per annum.

With 380 other critical clients still promised other services including respite and in home care, we are concerned the Liberals are short on necessary funding by \$40-\$50 million over the next four years.

The other policy that will be awaited with much interest is the fledgling Dignity for Disability (D4D) group. Lacking the people and support that big budgets bring, many in the sector will be looking to see what pressure D4D is putting on the majors in key preference discussions and what outcomes they hope to achieve. D4D will no doubt be looking to double its primary vote in the Legislative council to 20,000 which would be an outstanding achievement.

Reminder of the next Disability Speaks planning meeting 12.30 pm Dirc on Thursday (Tomorrow!)

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Chair

Disability Speaks Steering Committee

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