



"MEDIA RELEASE"

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"The ALP 2010 Election Policy Update" **Was it worth waiting 8 years for?**

At the Disability Speaks Public Meeting on February 17th, the Minister for Disability, Jennifer Rankine, did not reveal policy or funding initiatives and suggested we "watch this space". Well we watched and we watched and the Labor Party have released their Disability Policy for the 2010 election. The question is, was it worth waiting for? And most importantly how does the ALP stack up against the Liberal 2010 Disability policies.

The ALP Policy document confirms the allocation of additional education funding, \$17.25 million to establish six new special education units and a range of early intervention services to children with Autism Spectrum Disorders including \$4.0 million in support for private schools. This funding is not disability funding as it comes from the Education Dept budget and we have noted in a previous Disability Speaks communiqué and agreed that they are well targeted and will be very much appreciated by many with children in the disability community.

The 2010 Official ALP Disability Policy does however announce new funding of \$17.5 million for equipment and home modifications for adults and children with a disability. Disability Speaks has been running media advertisements in the metropolitan press demanding that this area of the disability unmet needs waiting lists be addressed and this program will support that call! This funding is new money over 4 years.

But Disability Speaks has also previously argued that at least \$120 million needs to be spent over the next four years by Government to address the current critical crisis in accommodation, respite and support services across South Australia. Sadly there is no new funding in the ALP policy for any other critical needs.

Subsequent to the ALP Official policy launch the government has also announced an additional transition program with \$14.5 million dollars over four years to assist in the transfer of clients with disabilities from hospital to appropriate accommodation. This again is a new funding initiative!

The original 17 page ALP Policy Document is an impressive presentation but only offers the additional equipment support plus plenty of sometimes questionable rhetoric. We are unable to deliver the ALP document direct online because of the file size but will supply on request the complete file to any Disability Speaks supporters who would like a full copy. Please ask by return email and we will fire it off to you! We do believe it is available online from the ALP website.

The ALP policy makes much of the impending Cappo/ Social inclusion inquiry and how this will be the basis for a future plan. This is however no guarantee the plan will be supported by the ALP and many cynics in the disability community are seeing it as another Rann fairy tale like his promised 2001 Disability pre election policy guaranteeing a ten year plan that has never eventuated.

There is however no doubt at this stage the ALP has committed more funding for disability services in the next four years than the Liberal party. The ALP policies also appear to be appropriately funded.

We have attached for your interest a direct comparison based on our interpretation around the questions from our Public meeting of how Disability Speaks interpret the relative position of the two major parties in their election policies. Please circulate this file to all your supporters and print a copy for your noticeboards and hand out!

We have asked and will deliver online on Thursday "The Final Word" in their own words a final one page summary from both the ALP and Liberal Party where they state their own 2010 Disability Commitments and support position

MeI have not decided who to vote for yet? Both parties' positions and history remain open to much conjecture and I have yet to see either Rann or Redmond talk about disability issues like they really matter. The choices on offer appear totally inadequate and a bit like being asked would you like to be tortured by testicular electrocution or waterboarding?..... there are no great outcomes which is very distressing.

We will keep you informed as the week progresses

Good luck in picking a winner!

David Holst

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