



***"MEDIA RELEASE"***  
***22.03.2010***

## **"What a great SA Election Day!"** **Disability Voters made a huge difference!**

If anyone thinks there are no votes in disability they need to think again. The 2010 SA State Election will go down in history as the day the disability sector became a political reality in Australia.

The SA election outcomes are simply breathtaking for the disability sector!

Dignity4Disability the minnow of the election is the front runner and looks like grabbing a Legislative Council upper house seat.

Contesting the second state election in a row and with a doubling of their primary vote and a favourable preference flow D4D currently lead in the race for the eleventh Legislative Council seat with 72% of the votes counted. This will be an extraordinary outcome reflective of the increasing strength of the D4D brand and an ever widening community understanding that disability is the single biggest community crisis facing our state and needs to be addressed outpolling the Australian Democrats and a host of other minor parties, some with enormous financial resources and questionable support bases D4D is on the verge of a history defining outcome with default candidate Kelly Vincent in line to win a seat!

We will keep you posted or direct information is available at  
<http://www.abc.net.au/elections/sa/2010/guide/lc-results.htm>

The re-election of the ALP will be received by the disability community with mixed feelings. The Liberal 2010 SA policy was a shocker, scary in the extreme with pages and pages of promises and only \$2.5 million per annum in funding committed. There was never any doubt that the Liberal policy was not achievable while based around the misleading assumption that the Liberals could screw massive (and unrealistic) cost savings out of the lowest per client funded disability budget in the nation. Despite repeated request for full information the Liberal party who's 2010 policy was tens of million of dollars worse than the 2006 support offered displayed the insensitivity and arrogance that traditional liberals seem too have for the disadvantaged. The clear impression was that the disabled should be paid off with platitudes and be grateful for whatever services they would get and the SA system may well have ended up like John Howards former federal approach, a pathetic cheque in the mail occasionally under the guise of Self Managed Funding and good luck!

Mike Rann the ALP Premier who's failure to embrace the disability sector has been well documented has received a massive kick in the pants. With more people in SA voting Liberal than Labor, 52% to 48% if Rann is to avoid the ultimate tap on the shoulder from the ALP

power brokers he may be well advised to return to the traditional ALP philosophy of supporting the battlers of the world.

While Disability Speaks does not take sides in the disability debate simply focusing on distributing sector information, ironically Mr Rann may well avoid a hung parliament by the decision of disability speaks chair David Holst acting personally to endorse Grace Portolesi, the ALP member for Hartley with a strongly supportive letterbox drop 5 days ahead of the election of every house and family in her electorate. Ms Portolesi who was once the Chief of Staff of highly regarded SA Disability Minister Jay Weatherill and who is intimately familiar with the real issues in the SA disability sector is seen by many in the SA disability sector as a strong voice for the disability sector in the ALP caucus and a future ALP cabinet member who as a young mother simply gets the need in the disability community and the necessary actions to address the crisis. Many in the disability community will be delighted Grace has retained her seat defying a 7.8% state-wide swing to the Liberals with just a 3.1% swing against her in her seat.

Already steps are under way within the ALP with two cabinet ministers losing their seats, cabinet resignations and deputy leadership challenges suggesting a new and more consumer friendly or more traditional ALP may be operating in SA in the very near future!

#### David Holst comments

"What a great result for so many who worked so hard in the disability sector. I am on the record as saying I have little time for political parties. My regular critique of parties sees me often accused as being a stooge by one or another, criticism I take as a badge of honour as it means people are taking disability advocacy seriously! In this election I was delighted to personally support a handful of politicians who from a disability viewpoint I believed had to keep their seats. The ALP's Frances Bedford and Grace Portolesi, Independent for Mitchell Kris Hanna, Family First's Robert Brokenshire and my local member Liberal David Pisoni are the sort of people I support as we need more people in Parliament who are the right people, in there for the right reasons and who want to make a difference. I am personally delighted that those I personally endorsed all look like winning their seats and I hope my support made a small difference.

The possible election of a D4D candidate will be the icing on the cake and something we had not even dared to dream of. When I said last week the major party policy choices were like choosing between two types of torture that was the truth. The ALP record and 2010 policy was very poor but fully costed while the Liberal policy was far worse, underfunded by at least \$ 50 million dollars and a stinker. We can only hope the voter backlash has got through to the ALP and Rann stops pretending and pulls his finger out on disability issues. We can also hope that federally both the ALP and the Liberals take notice that the disability lobby is not going away. The last 8 years has simple been practise for better things to come we hope!

Saturday March 20th is a great day for people with a disability in SA

The latest D4D media release is attached for your interest"

Disability Speaks would like to ask that in these exciting next few days that you pause and share a thought for Dr Paul Collier the lead D4D candidate and party president and his family, particularly his mother Wendy after Paul tragically passed away. There is no doubt that Paul would be over the moon with this election outcome but as Sam Paior D4D executive member

and the D4D candidate for Adelaide said when asked by the media if Pauls loss and the subsequent publicity had benefitted the D4D campaign.

"Every cloud has a silver lining but it is terrible we had such a cloud!",

Rest in Peace Paul with a smile on your face! We all shed a tear for you on election night!

D4D now has enormous challenges to run an effective parliamentary party. It is unfair and totally ridiculous that the State Electoral Commission did not allow D4D to select another high profile lead candidate. Like many small parties the lead candidate was the President, spokesperson and leader and the electoral commission insistence that the second on the ticket must take the seat after his death, leaves the party with a candidate who lent their name for support and a little publicity and is questionably equipped to strongly represent the tens of thousands of people who's primary votes and preferences were directed to D4D.

To put an inexperienced person in a position where it is their decision alone whether they accept a \$150,000+ dollar a year job for the next 8 years is questionable. Kelly Vincent who is a delightful young lady is at risk whatever she does. She will struggle fighting the fierce parliamentary battles needed to deliver the changes and choice that people with a disability voted for D4D for but can not be blamed for taking the parliamentary line because who could blame anyone for being seduced by the one in a million opportunity that has opened in front of her?

The executive leaders of D4D are equally challenged as they can neither pressure a young girl to step aside or they support her into parliament whilst knowing it is doubtful she has the experience, academic background, political skills or street smarts to be a player in the cauldron that is parliamentary colosseum and risk crushing her under an unrealistic wave of expectation from the disability community who have been waiting decades for a parliamentary representative to fight the big fight on their behalf. D4D is a party with the most minute of resources.

The Electoral Commission must step in and work with D4D to find additional supports that are fair to the D4D party, Kelly and most importantly the thousands of voters who have voted for D4D expecting an outcome for people with a disability. This may involve the provision of additional support staff, resources or what ever other option is available as in this instance neither the D4D party or the voters got to select their final candidate.

There is also no doubt that the election outcome will further re energise the disability lobby in SA. We need people to step up and fill Paul's shoes!

We will keep you informed of the SA election outcome and look forward to seeing more supporters at the next DS planning meeting on April 15th at DIRC at 1.00pm where the National Disability Insurance Scheme will be discussed.

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[www.disabilityspeaks.com.au](http://www.disabilityspeaks.com.au)

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