



"MEDIA RELEASE"
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"Round 2"

Just warming up on NDIS



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Hi Everybody,

My name is John Della Bosca. As you may have already heard, I've been appointed Campaign Director for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I am absolutely delighted to have the opportunity to work on something I feel very passionate about.

Over the next week or two I'm going to be spending some time making a scan of the landscape and discussing opportunities for the next stage of our campaign. I look forward to chatting to as many of you as possible - I will be taking the opportunity to pick the brains of as many colleagues as I can as we consider our next steps.

But given the extraordinary events of the last week I think a few initial observations might be helpful.

I came on board on August 9 in the middle of the federal election campaign. During the campaign both parties reaffirmed their support for a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and again promised to take seriously the findings of the current Productivity Commission Inquiry into Disability Care and Support. The fact that announcements regarding disability were made during a hectic campaign and received considerable media coverage is a promising step in the right direction.

The campaign provided an opportunity to achieve an important goal - both parties and the Greens went on record supporting an NDIS. Support for an NDIS as a point of consensus

and not just a curiosity for the five weeks of the election campaign is a critically important outcome.

Hypothetically if the NDIS had been a major point of difference in the campaign the adrenaline would be flowing - but the NDIS could have become an all or nothing bet on the election outcome. The exchange of blows might have severely compromised an incoming government's policy options.

The bi-partisan support creates an opportunity to firmly establish an NDIS as a point of consensus in the contemporary political culture. In summary - winning relative arguments with government about exactly what we want should, in theory, be easier than winning a threshold argument about whether an NDIS should happen at all.

Bi-partisan support has also become more important in the face of the final outcome, with the critical role the independents will now play in the federal parliament.

A strong qualification on this optimism is, of course, that both major party responses are contingent on the Productivity Commission inquiry. This of course provides "wriggle room" for any incoming government, which means we need to continue to find new ways to keep the pressure on. Anticipating various possible outcomes and increasing public awareness and government interest in our campaign in the interim is a key objective between now and February.

As part of the campaign we have begun conducting some research to inform our work. The research demonstrated that while coverage of disability during the federal election campaign raised interest and awareness in the short term, the effect was short lived. This is further evidence of our need to get out and let the Australian public know what the problems are and how the NDIS will solve them.

The research also demonstrated that while awareness of the difficulties faced by people with a disability, their families and carers is reasonably low, when the situation is explained they are generally supportive of change. They are convinced that people with a disability and their families deserve a fair go as fellow Australians, and they recognise that supporting people effectively will benefit the nation economically and socially. Again this is positive, and means we need to redouble our efforts to make the general community more aware of all the benefits of implementing an NDIS. We will of course continue to do our homework and conduct further research as the campaign continues.

Regardless of the final outcome of the federal election, it is clear we have a massive task ahead of us and I welcome the opportunity to discuss your views on the best way to achieve our mission. My email address is john.dellabosca@ndis.org.au - I look forward to hearing from you.

John Della Bosca

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