



Welcome to 2012

When Disability becomes a priority?

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What were your new year resolutions? Are they still going and are you confident of success?

Did Prime Minister Julia Gillard and SA Premier Jay Weatherill include making disability support one of their highest priorities when the bell rang at midnight on New Year's Eve?

Across the country disability advocates and professionals will continue to work hard for a better deal for people with disability. We commend the Support Workers Support Group meeting above for those looking to make a grass roots difference.

There are 3 issues that remain very much in focus from a Disability Speaks perspective.

1. What financial support will SA Premier Jay Weatherill give to the Strong Voices, Social Inclusion Board report handed down in October last year. The report indicates that over \$ 100 million dollars per annum in additional funding is needed to make even a short term impact on the disaster that is disability support levels in SA. This commitment may well differentiate our new Premier from the previous incumbent as truly a politician who cares. The Premier has asked for time to shape an appropriate financial response and Disability Speaks sees merit in such an approach. The 2012 SA State Budget will however become the litmus test for the credibility or otherwise of our Premier who is working hard to position himself as genuine and honest unlike the public perception often tagged on his predecessor.
2. When will the Federal Government make a genuine financial commitment to National Disability Insurance. As Prime Minister Gillard battles this week with another dent in her already bruised integrity and credibility her announcement that " Her commitment to National Disability Insurance will define her government" will prove to be either a sign of great leadership or another of the trashed promises she has made like Carbon Tax and Pokies reform. We certainly hope and intend to do everything we can to encourage her to deliver the financial support that NDIS needs to become operational.
3. What will the Federal Government do in the interim to reduce the crisis pressure in the National Disability Service networks. The Productivity Commission report strongly recommends that urgent support be allocated. While the Federal Government grapples with funding the \$6.5 billion per annum NDIS program it

cannot claim to have empathy and understanding unless it also moves urgently in the 2012 Federal Budget to pump significant additional funding into the system. Any additional respite or accommodation options created under such a program will sustain to the NDIS program and beyond and thus become incremental to NDIS when it is up and running.

Disability Speaks appreciates your ongoing support and looks forward to keeping you updated on sector developments.

We truly hope 2012 is the year of good news and big announcements for the disability sector

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