



# “Exactly What is the Coalition’s Commitment to the NDIS?”

**MEDIA RELEASE: February 3rd, 2012**

We couldn’t have written it better ourselves.

Please read the following columns by Carer/Journalist Sue O’Reilly and Comedienne/Person with Disability and Editor of ABC’s Ramp Up - Stella Young.

Our disappointment in the Coalition’s stance is palpable.

**Come on, Mr Abbott - walk a mile in our shoes**

<http://www.thepunch.com.au/articles/come-on-mr-abbott-walk-a-mile-in-our-shoes/>

Sue writes: “Clearly, neither Abbott nor his shadow Treasurer has grasped the rock-solid economic case for dumping a disorganised, wasteful, failed care and support system that prevents thousands of people with disabilities and carers from participating in the workforce, condemning them to a lifetime of subsisting on poverty-level pensions and haphazard charity handouts.

“As the Productivity Commission made clear, the “\$6 billion price tag” is not money down the drain to assuage a few bleeding hearts. It is an essential investment to stop more good money being thrown after billions of bad, and to prevent the costs of the current shambolic system blowing completely out of control by around 2020. There is actually no economic case whatsoever for delay.”

**Disability funding is no indulgence, Mr Abbott**

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-02-01/young-abbott-misses-the-point-of-ndis/3804576>

Stella writes "The thing is, Mr Abbott, fixing the broken disability system we have in this country isn't like saving all your pocket money until you could finally afford that CD player you desperately wanted when you were 12. It's not a luxury item that we can simply do without until there's some spare cash floating around. What you said yesterday made it very clear that you see improving the living conditions of people with disabilities and our families as an indulgence."

**From: Mitchell Fifield (Senator)**

Good afternoon

Today Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott delivered a speech to the National Press Club in Canberra, in which he reiterated that a National Disability Insurance Scheme will be a priority for a Coalition Government.

I have attached his speech for your information, with the relevant section highlighted. He said in his speech:

***"After all, the measure of a decent society is how it looks after its most vulnerable members.***

***Once the budget is strongly back in surplus, our aim is to provide the additional services that Australians yearn for but know can't be built on debt. To be sustainable they have to be the social dividend of a strong economy.***

***The coalition strongly supports the Productivity Commission's recommendation for a disability insurance scheme but, with an estimated price tag of \$6 billion a year (roughly equal to the Commonwealth's current interest bill) this important and necessary reform can't fully be implemented until the budget returns to strong surplus.***

***It's one of the reasons why it's so important to return to surplus quickly. And it's not the only important social initiative that would become deliverable once the budget is back in the black."***

Tony also responded to a question from a journalist regarding the NDIS, saying:

***"There is a process which the current government has announced, and which the Coalition supports. There's a scoping study currently underway. There are various studies and work being undertaken by the Council of Australian Governments, because this does have to involve both the states and the commonwealth, and let's wait and see what comes out of that process. I think this is an important and necessary reform. I think it really is a test of our quality as a society - what we can do more and better for people with disabilities. But we do have to accept that in the end, everything has got to be paid for, and it would be so much easier to pay for important and necessary reforms like disability insurance if we didn't have the waste and extravagance which we've seen almost every day from the current government."***

I've also attached the media release issued by the Every Australian Counts campaign, welcoming Mr Abbott's comments today.

It should be noted that the current Government have not allocated a single new dollar to an NDIS over the forward estimates.

As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch if I can be of any assistance.

Regards

Mitch

**SENATOR MITCH FIFIELD**

SHADOW MINISTER FOR DISABILITIES, CARERS AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR  
MANAGER OF OPPOSITION BUSINESS IN THE SENATE  
SENATOR FOR VICTORIA

PARLIAMENT HOUSE CANBERRA ACT 2600 TEL 02 6277 3666 FAX 02 6277 5758

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**David Holst**

Chair - Disability Speaks Steering Committee & Intellectual Disability Association of S.A (IDASA)

Mob. 0418 555 683

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

Email. [disabilityspeaks@internode.on.net](mailto:disabilityspeaks@internode.on.net)



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