



Joe Hockey on the National Disability Scheme

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Comments made yesterday by Federal Shadow Treasurer Joe Hockey raise many questions about Liberal power bases and future policy and leadership. Someone should ask would Hockey's approval rating be higher than Prime Minister Gillard at 27% if he ever got the top job? His ability to imitate a buffoon is quite extraordinary?

This ill informed, insensitive and grubby response from a professional MP is a sobering and timely reminder that anyone who believes

- Either PM Gillard's fanciful stories about "I have implemented NDIS" and it is in play or
- That the Liberal Party has suddenly embraced the desperately disadvantaged Needs a huge reality check

We must continue to make our voices heard until both major parties put on the table a genuine and long term funding plan. Until then to use a term that Mr Hockey will probably understand, much of what is being said about NDIS on both sides of the house is just bullshit!

If Gillard is serious and Abbott is serious a bipartisan committee as has been suggested is clearly the best answer?

But who is serious??

BY:LANAI VASEK
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OPPOSITION treasury spokesman Joe Hockey has undermined Tony Abbott's support for a National Disability Insurance Scheme, declaring he won't commit to something he cannot deliver.

Tony Abbott has pledged Coalition support for the Labor's National Disability Insurance Scheme and has offered "constructive cooperation" on the issue.

Mr Hockey said he supported the NDIS, but refused to commit to the scheme or match Labor's proposed timeframe for its establishment.

"I'm not going to raise expectations and then not deliver," the Coalition treasury spokesman told the National Press Club today.

"I won't do that. That undermines confidence, it undermines hope and that's what we've got to go to the next election with."

The opposition has lashed the government for failing to rule out an additional levy to fund the NDIS. But Mr Hockey also refused to rule out a levy.

"I'm not going to make promises I can't deliver. I want to see how it unfolds over the next few months," he said.

The best way to fund the NDIS was to get rid of net debt, Mr Hockey said.

Mr Hockey said Labor's decision to bring forward the NDIS by a year and commit \$1 billion to the measure was a "cruel hoax", because the commitment fell well short of the \$3.9 billion the Productivity Commission recommended for the first stage of the scheme.

He said without funding from the states and territories, the NDIS would never get off the ground.

"It's only now the government says it is engaging with the states," Mr Hockey said.

"From what I hear from the states the funding needs are far greater than what they actually have."

Mr Abbott has pledged his strong support for the NDIS, urging a bipartisan approach to getting it off the ground.

"We want to make this a reform that lasts, that is genuinely historic change, not something which is a political football," he said recently.

"This will require a very high level of consultation and attention to detail that can't be rushed without big risks to the scheme's subsequent success."

The government has so far ignored Mr Abbott's offers of support, declining his offer to establish a joint committee to progress the scheme.

Mr Hockey was tackled on the Coalition's commitment to provide tax cuts without a carbon tax, saying the cuts would be made to the tax tables as they stood today, not to the new rates that come into force when the carbon tax is introduced.

Despite challenging Labor to reject the "tainted" vote of sidelined MP Craig Thomson, Mr Hockey said the Coalition would find it difficult to refuse Mr Thomson's vote if it was offered in support of a motion of no-confidence in the government.

In a wide-ranging speech that analysed last week's federal budget, Mr Hockey flagged a hardline fiscal strategy from the Coalition if it was to win the next election.

However the treasury spokesman was short on detail, saying all would be revealed before the next election.

The one new announcement from Mr Hockey's speech was the Coalition's plan to hire more secondary tax commissioners.

"While appointments will be based on merit, these four additional part-time appointments will be individuals who have deep experience in the private sector," he said.

"These second commissioners will be based outside of Canberra. Ideally they will include appointments from regional Australia and small business."

David Holst

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

Mob. 0418 555 683

Web. www.disabilityspeaks.com.au

Email. disabilityspeaks@internode.on.net



www.everyaustraliancounts.org.au



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