



# Long Term Funding! Is the answer

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The media and disability community reports around the COAG outcomes yesterday are subdued

Watching something as important as NDIS being used as a political football distresses all of us.

The 2011 Australian Productivity Commission report was crystal clear, "Funding for NDIS must be a federal responsibility" and "There would be a need for the long term funding to be resolved urgently"

Today's attempts by the Prime Minister to blame liberal states on disappointing COAG/ NDIS outcomes deserve our pity and scorn. As a Prime Minister her lack of credibility has become habitual. Now is the time for leadership not politics, and Ms Gillard has the power and the opportunity to lock in the funding arrangements as we speak.

We are delighted our local Premier Jay Weatherill continues to take a public leadership position in driving this national NDIS discussion and the extra funding he has delivered will be beneficial to many.

Not a great day yesterday as we hoped for. More detailed comments from Disability Speaks and IDASA are below from an ABC radio transcript this morning. A copy of the D4d/ Kelly Vincent MLC Press release is also attached for your interest

**David Holst, Chair of the Intellectual Disability Association of South Australia** (891ABC 7.38-7.45) National Disability Insurance Scheme

**(Abraham:** Yesterday after the COAG meeting, Prime Minister wasn't happy because some of the states; Victoria in particular, Queensland as well, aren't playing ball on the National Disability Insurance Scheme. South Australia has signed up, \$20m was set aside from some 212 extra million dollars for disability funding in this year's state budget was ear marked for the NDIS launch over the next three years, but ... we started to get phone calls yesterday as a program as people started to find out in the disability sector what South Australia has signed up for in terms of our pilot. Because these are sort of ... launch sites they're called; they're running this as a pilot scheme. The South Australian launch which will start in July next year is going to focus on about five thousand children, Jay Weatherill says, with a disability, aged nought ... to fourteen. But for the first year it will be birth to five years of age. Now we had some calls from people saying, 'wait a minute, of all the areas of the sector, birth to five years thankfully is reasonably well-resourced; it is not what you would regard as a critical problem area. One person I spoke to said I doubt at any of the public forums on this anyone got up and said, we've got a real ... big, problem in birth to five year olds. ... you know obviously every area could do with more funding but no particular area is reasonably well-served in South Australia. The area that needs help are the older disabled; their parents, crisis accommodation... that's very, very clear. David Holst is chair of the Intellectual Disability Association of South Australia. Good morning David. ... do you agree, is there a concern about what South Australia has signed up for in terms of the focus?) I think many people would describe what's happening within the IS as a little bit like that novel that's going around called Fifty Shades of Grey; there's a bit of pleasure and a bit of pain, and a lot of people from the online blogs last night were highly critical that South Australia was ... going to put this extra money – and you must say, that to get extra money out of the Federal Government any time for disability is a good ... a great thing. And Jay Weatherill should be congratulated for leveraging some money into our state because it's desperately needed, but the comments that you were quoting and I think were probably reflective of the South Australian disability community that there is significant other areas of much greater need than the Zero to Five years category. **(Bevan:** And we're talking about adults with disabilities?) The Productivity Commission Report that came out in 2011 and had 86 recommendations and a number of those recommendations are simply being ignored by the Federal Government at the moment. I mean one of them is that the Federal Government should be the sole funder; this suggestion that states should be putting in money is against the ... Productivity Commission recommendation. Another recommendation was that the long-term funding agreement should be struck as a priority. That you shouldn't just be arguing about what is happening today and next week and some of the ... areas that it identified; it did identify children under five as a possibly early start point but it also talked about people who are now cared for by ageing carers and people ... as being inappropriately placed in nursing homes ... so there's a massive need and I think locally a lot of good work has been done in the past in recent years on early intervention programs and I guess the other thing was that in terms of this pilot the community wasn't really consulted and asked, 'what should we make a priority for South Australia?'. This was a decision that was largely made by the Government. **(Abraham:** State or Federal or both?) The pilot target, I think was a state decision **(Abraham:** Right.) They had to put a proposal to the Government; I sit on a few committees ... no one came to us and said 'what should be our request for the pilot program priority' and ... if they had come to

us and I think the calls and the blogs that I refer to, I think people may have been steering it in a different direction. (**Abraham:** David ... also, the decision to I think across the sector, so they're going to focus on 5,000 children with a disability aged birth to fourteen, our understanding is, the Productivity Commission was recommending a sort of a geographical or postcode based approach – I don't know if that's a better approach but it's certainly not doing that by the looks of it?) Well the ... whole NDI's plan at this point in time is very grey. And it hasn't been finalised; it hasn't been structured. The Productivity Commission, and that's what they appear to be doing in Canberra, the ACT is going to be basically, well we're going to give a broad range of services under this pilot program to a broad range of consumers. And there was a number of blogs online last night where people were going 'I'll be moving to Canberra next year'. And in Tasmania it's in adolescents. In South Australia it's going to be young infants and in the end ... there will be a lot of people that sit down today and go, hey am I better off and is there any hope in the near future that I'm an 85 year old looking after a 55 year old and have been for 50 years, is there light on the end of the horizon? And they're going to say 'look this just looks like a serious political game' I don't know what all the Liberal Premiers think when the Labor Premiers get the nod yesterday; I can't imagine they're pleased and this shouldn't be a political football that's being punted around. You know, if Mrs Gillard was really serious the long-term funding plan would have been the first thing she should have sorted and not playing games around the edges on what's a pilot, who gets a pilot and who kicks in to pay for it. (**Bevan:** David Holst thanks for talking to us ... we'll take up these questions with the Premier at 8:30 ... we really appreciate that; he's happy to take your calls. 1300 222 891.)

### **David Holst**

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

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