



Is NDIS a pretend priority?

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Were you feeling uncomfortable over the weekend?

We certainly were!

More doubts that Julia Gillard is not genuine about NDIS escalated on the weekend when the Prime Minister announced the proposed funding for the Gonski Education reforms

Gillard will put in two dollars for every extra dollar the states spend on boosting education with the Feds promising an extra \$9.7 billion per annum.

This is the second time in 12 months that the funding that would have completely fixed the national disability crisis has been directed to more vote winning priorities after \$6.5 billion per annum was handed out in July last year to provide cost of living supports to hundreds of thousands of potential voters.

For four decades disability has failed to be a priority. It appears nothing has changed in 2013?

The weekend announcements confirm once again that disability is being shunted down the priority list, not because of a bigger crisis or lesser need but because of political expediency. The disappointment of the 400,000 people with disability remaining as part of a fundamentally broken system will be palpable.

Under the proposed Federal NDIS funding plan the Gillard Government offers just one dollar for every dollar extra the states contribute.

It is little wonder only one state (NSW) has shown support at this time. It is the wrong long term deal as everyone knows.

The Australian disability community is being short changed, sold out or just plain shafted however one wants to balance the priority equation particularly given the Australian Productivity Commission in the 2011 review of disability services (which largely do not exist for many) strongly recommended that 100% of the additional NDIS should be paid by the federal government. The Commission made it quite clear that a Federal/State shared approach had failed in the past and would struggle in the future.

The Australian education system may not be perfect but it is very good. The language of the Gonski report does not include the crisis driven rhetoric that dominates the Productivity Commission report on disability. The Gonski report is all about improving a system, not the overwhelming need for a brand new system like NDIS.

Politicians of all persuasions have long understood 'that there are big big votes in education'

By literally bribing the states with a two for one offer Gillard is ensuring that they will support her potentially big vote winning Gonski Educational plan and at the same time another nail has been hammered into the likely success of NDIS. There is only so much money to go round.

People with disability are entitled to much better than this shabby, lack of priority treatment. We will wait with interest to hear what the enigmatic Mr Tony Abbott has to say about disability funding. At this stage he has no offer on the table and this bad Gillard deal may still eventuate as the best available.

Given people with disability have for so long been brainwashed to accept what ever scraps or funding leftovers are available, some will still feel any form of NDIS, no matter how diluted is better than what we currently have. How sad will it be if "Disabilitycare" eventually finishes as little more than an apparition of little substance to those who matter most?

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