



" Gillard must deliver NDIS levy NOW!"

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For a long time we at Disability Speaks have unwaveringly demanded a NDIS levy. It is the right answer.

If Prime Minister Gillard is prepared to assume 100% Federal funding responsibility for NDIS she should be applauded if she delivers a wide ranging Disability Care Australia levy in the May 2013 Federal Budget as today's press suggests.

If as the press suggests the funding plan also includes a serious audit of the National Disability Pension (like the recent British audit version?) the applause will be deafening. The Disability Pension scheme remains a joke and does not adequately support the people it was primarily designed to care for while consuming massive funding dollars that should have been long directed to disability services.

If such a NDIS levy is legislated before the September election the future of NDIS can be assured. That could become Gillard's greatest legacy as PM.

It was a political faux pas combined with a lack of genuine understanding of disability history when the Federal Government refused to embrace an NDIS levy following the release of the Australian Productivity Commission report in 2011.

Prime Minister Gillard showed poor judgement and a dearth of ticker with that call.

Full, long term, 100% Federal NDIS funding was stressed as essential by the Productivity Commission to ensure NDIS would not be bastardised by State Premiers avoiding their joint responsibilities. The history of state contribution to disability support is universally appalling.

This Government missed the chance to deliver the best long term NDIS funding platform by embracing a contribution from all Australians towards an essential NDIS funding strategy that would have endured over time.

A simple 1% increase in the Medicare levy would have raised the \$6.5 billion per annum needed to fund NDIS. The 0.5% suggested in today's press will not cover 100% funding

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/medicare-levy-hike-to-pay-for-the-national-disability-insurance-scheme/story-e6freuy9-1226631862091>

The 50/50 deal that Julia Gillard has attempted to foist on the states is little more than a pathetic replay of Commonwealth/ State/ Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) first launched in the early nineties that dismally failed people with disability virtually from its inception.

Rumours escalating that the ALP may now deliver a NDIS levy should be encouraged. While their motivation may be questionable Gillard must be applauded if in the May Budget she finally faces up to NDIS necessity. Federal Budget expenditure has rocked by \$100 billion per annum since 2007 despite Federal income only rising \$70 Billion per annum. Such poor financial and budget management has consigned NDIS to future systemic failure unless a levy is now introduced.

There is no other realistic NDIS funding option available. Funding that should have been directed to NDIS has been wasted and now only a budgetary black hole remains.

Abbott while no doubt talking negatively about another great big "NDIS new tax" would behind the facade almost be grateful as a 1% levy would fix the national disability crisis and thus save him the problem of crushing or delaying the NDIS program that he fully understands is so desperately needed. Abbott has no secret stash of cash he will use to fund NDIS either. The Abbott plan to levy big business for paid parental leave shows Abbott understands how beneficial a levy can be.

If however Gillard is intending to leave the states with the 50 % responsibility for NDIS funding she has been promoting in recent times then she should file the idea of a NDIS levy deeply in the bin. A flawed system is a flawed system and such a partial levy would not fix the NDIS funding problem or guarantee the long term success of NDIS.

Let's hope Gillard now delivers what's right for the 400,000 Australians with disability.

This may well be the last chance for decades for all of us if she does not?

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