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"Tony Abbott Speaks"



**JOINT PRESS RELEASE
THE HON. TONY ABBOTT MHR, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
THE HON. JOE HOCKEY MHR, SHADOW TREASURER
SENATOR MITCH FIFIELD, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DISABILITIES, CARERS AND THE
VOLUNTARY SECTOR
STATEMENT ON THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME**

The Coalition supports the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The Coalition has supported the establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme every step of the way.

We want the NDIS to be a success and we want it to belong to all Australians. It is too important to become a partisan football.

We want to ensure that the NDIS is a reality as soon as possible.

We know that the Productivity Commission did not recommend funding the NDIS through a new tax.

We understand that many families are doing it tough and that any tax increase on them will hurt.

And we know that Labor's mismanagement of the economy and the state of Labor's budget do not currently allow for the NDIS to be funded from consolidated revenue without further borrowings.

But Australians with a disability and their carers want the confidence that the NDIS means a permanent change in the way that our country supports people with a disability.

People with a disability should not have to wait any longer than is necessary for the support they need.

For these reasons, the Coalition is prepared to consider providing support for the Government's proposed increase to the Medicare levy.

The legislation to give effect to the Government's increase to the Medicare levy and the full NDIS package must be introduced and voted on in the current parliament. The legislation must establish how the Scheme will work and who will be eligible.

The Government must also outline how the remaining 60% funding shortfall will be provided.

The Coalition also believes that:

- All elements of the NDIS required for launch must be legislated in the current parliament. While the NDIS framework legislation has passed the parliament, the final NDIS regulations known as the NDIS rules which will provide the operational detail for the scheme should also be released.
- The Disability Care Australia Fund to be established to hold levy proceeds should be legislated in the current parliament and be supervised by the Guardians of the Future Fund to prevent the raiding of this fund as occurred with the Higher Education Endowment Fund.
- The assessment tool the NDIS Launch Transition Agency will use to determine participant eligibility should be released prior to the levy legislation being introduced to provide maximum transparency about scheme eligibility for the parliament, potential scheme participants and service providers. This is so that people with a physical impairment, sensory impairment or intellectual impairment know whether they are in or out.
- The Government should ensure complete transparency over the agreements with other jurisdictions and release all elements of the bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and each jurisdiction for launch sites and full jurisdiction-wide roll out.

If elected to government the Coalition would resolve to ensure that the increase to the Medicare levy is a temporary increase and will be removed when the budget returns to strong surplus and the NDIS can be funded without it.

Australians with a disability need certainty in relation to funding of the NDIS and they need certainty on the details of how the NDIS will operate.

The Coalition whole-heartedly supports the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We want it to happen, and we want it to happen in this term of parliament.

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David Holst

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