



# How to Vote Disability? “Bye Bye Kevin”

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Neither Disability Speaks or the Intellectual Disability Association of SA (IDASA) has ever published a party focused position on how to vote come Elections. That is not part of our charter. All of our board and committee members have their own opinions and they are diverse and respected.

As Chair of both organisations I am often privately asked how I intend to vote? My Auntie will almost certainly ring tomorrow again

My personal answer is straight forward. I consider

1. The only issue that interests me in this election is what is best for people with disability, their parents, families and Carers. Other issues including carbon taxes, boat people, NBN or whatever are of little personal concern and do not influence my voting.
2. I am a swinging voter. My vote changes from election to election depending on 1 above. That is a guaranteed.
3. Voting not on party lines, but for candidates who personally have supported disability as a priority, D4D and me as an advocate over an extended period is a great idea if you live in one of their electorates. Current members like Steve Georganas (ALP) in Hindmarsh, Christopher Pyne, (LIB) Amanda Rishworth (ALP) . All have been very strong disability supporters in SA over many years and would be badly missed by the sector if not re elected
4. Voting 1 for Nick Xenophon in the Senate in SA is a no brainer. See 3 above! He is great!
5. At this election the policies of the major parties are largely identical, both fully support the NDIS agreements in place and both parties and leaders need to be taken on trust.
6. The Greens have been a massive disappointment around disability issues. While voting for NDIS they did not use their balance of power to make things happen quicker, nor to ensure that key Productivity Commission recommendations were implemented. The 50/50 funding model, the injection of just \$1.0 billion for start up money not \$3.0 billion and the lack of crisis funding while NDIS is piloted are all

major issues the Greens could have changed if they had been genuinely NDIS and disability focused.

Given all of the above and given that preferences from every vote eventually end up with either the red team or blue team if you have to decide between Labor and Liberal at this election I would personally vote Liberal.

There will be a NDIS program in the future, that is beyond doubt and well established. Whether it is a great scheme, well funded or just a shadow of what the Productivity Commission recommended will depend on the management, financial strength and effectiveness of the economy leading into 2016 when the \$billions needed are scheduled to flow. It will also depend on the results and costs of the pilot programs currently being trialled.

Watching in my opinion one of the worst Prime Ministers ever (remembering he was sacked by his own party in his first term because of systemic failure in his policy roll outs) campaigning that the other leader is likely to be more inept offends me. A PM with little positive history to stand on other than a remarkable talent for shafting his own party and trying to character assassinate an alternate leader gives me no confidence.

Having met and discussed NDIS with Tony Abbott personally on a number of occasions and his high ranking SA lieutenant Christopher Pynne on more occasions than we can remember, I have no doubt both are genuine in their commitment to a NDIS. It is hard to imagine the Liberals will do a worse job running the economy than the ALP has. They have failed to meet so many financial benchmarks they nominated and the rapidly ballooning deficit is scary. The interest being paid on this deficit would easily 100% fund NDIS immediately. NDIS will only prosper if adequate funding is available past 2016.

There is a risk that the hard headed traditional business focus of the Liberal Party will overwhelm the promises Mr Abbott is currently making around social support program's like NDIS. Given this campaign is all about trust from an Abbott perspective we think it is safe to assume he will honour his promises through to 2016.

The excessive and misleading Disability Care promotion by the ALP including the \$30 million dollar advertising campaign has led the general public to believe the disability crisis is fixed. It is not and may not be for many years. As an example public comments this week by Jennifer Macklin that all SA 15-24 year olds will be covered by 2016 and all 33,000 eligible recipients fully covered in SA by 2018 are neither legislated, formally agreed with the state or contracted. Ms Macklin is welcome to place a wager with me, given the ALPs questionable recent history of delivering policy on schedule, on whether her pre election guarantees are worth the paper they are written on? I think not!! Let's have a big bet Jenny?

Bill Shorten who will almost inevitably be leading the ALP in 2016 will no doubt have great appeal to disability driven voters at the next election. He will be a very appealing option to many if Mr Abbott is elected PM and disappoints.

I stress that the above comments are my personal opinions and not reflective of IDASA or Disability Speaks policy.

If you don't agree I respect your right to choose and disagree.

Choice is a concept I am very comfortable with.

Good luck and good voting. May the best team win!

**David Holst**

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