



What happens next?

MEDIA RELEASE: September 10th, 2013

The sun came up Sunday regardless of anyone's political persuasion
By Monday evening many in the disability sector were reading the following quote distributed by the Carers Association,

"Work on the development of the National Disability Insurance Scheme will continue. People with disabilities and their families and Carers can be confident work will continue without interruption. The NDIS is now owned by the nation and I hope forever remains above politics"
Prime Minister elect, Tony Abbott.

My personal prediction gleaned and distributed as editor that change was the best national option was widely supported by Australian voters. Comment from so many online and traditional media editors agreed change was essential. The history of the previous government in poor governance, financial management and major program delays put at risk many future programs including the one closest to our heart National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Commenting on issues that impact the disability sector especially politics, is incorporated in the Disability Speaks charter (see highlighted section at the bottom) In nearly 600 media releases written over the last decade this forum has played serious political hardball and will continue to do so. Unlike other online forums including "Get Up" or Andrew Bolt we have no political agenda. At a state level we remain very positive about local ALP efforts (and expect more positive local announcements in the near future) while distressed about the ALP mess in Canberra that ultimately put so much at risk including NDIS. At a local level it has been suggested by very important people recently that our published opinion on the achievements of the Weatherill / ALP Government has been inflated. Seems we can't win, but our aim is to engage and encourage debate high level and media debate about disability.

To the handful of ALP aficionados who had a pot online, your comments on the press release were as expected.

Not being brave enough to play serious politics has in my opinion as editor and the opinion of the IDASA Board been a weakness of too many disability advocates and delayed essential progress. That is one of the reasons Disability Speaks was established. We call it as we see it and praise and criticise accordingly. Unlike many in the Disability sector (often scared to lose funding) we seriously challenge and critique politicians without fear or favour.

The SA political party, Dignity for Disability (and our star local SA MP, the Hon Kelly Vincent D4d) is the highest profile outcome of disability being elevated from impotent advocates to engaged political lobbyists in SA. A quality NDIS type program has long been and remains our goal. We wonder what disability support stars will rise amongst the "Clustershmuck" of new Federal Senators. We expect Family First rep Bob Day, from SA, to be a strong disability sector supporter.

With a new Federal government elected we look forward to working with them to ensure that the trust that has been promised will be translated to the well funded, well organised and well managed NDIS program we expect and need. The credibility of Disability Speaks and our supporters are recognised at both State and Federal level as is our ability from our extensive networks to provide informed comment.

It is very heartening to see the above quote distributed by the Carers Association post election.

Those whose party was not championed pre election or subsequently a winner should reassess their engagement in the advocacy process. Advocates who's personal philosophy is not a-political should not be surprised their commentary may be dismissed.

Neither Disability Speaks nor myself as editor will change our style or efforts to appease critics who's personal political agendas or bias are apparent. As always we welcome and will respond to all feedback to our site as we have in the past.

In the next three years Disability Speaks and the Intellectual Disability Association of SA will continue to work hard to ensure the critical shortage of funding that has stifled service delivery for people with disability for decades is addressed within NDIS. At this stage, as previous Disability Speaks releases have confirmed, funding to 2016 remains largely problematic at best and a solution remains work in progress.

We look forward to the new government delivering on its promises
And working with them as they do and challenging them if they don't

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