

**NDS VICTORIA
CHANGE AGENDA**

2010 STATE ELECTION

Three sure steps to a fair go



National Disability Services

VICTORIA

Three sure steps to a fair go...

One in five Victorians – **more than a million people** – will be affected by a disability through all or part of their lives. Tens of thousands of Victorians – family members, friends and service providers – are currently providing primary care and support for people with disabilities.

At some stage, most Victorian families will be confronted with disability issues.

The number of Victorians affected by a significant or severe disability is expected to rise in the future, with analysts predicting an increase in demand for specialist disability services of 7.5 per cent a year. Many of these people will face profound challenges to living a fulfilling lifeⁱ.

All Victorians with a disability should have a universal entitlement to high-quality support to meet their individual needs. The solution is the establishment of a **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**ⁱⁱ. **We ask all political parties to strongly commit to its establishment.**

Until the NDIS is introduced, Victoria needs a robust service system which enables people with a disability to experience a good quality of life. To achieve this **we are seeking immediate funding for besieged services which support people with a disability.**

Victoria has a State Disability Plan (2002-12) which is visionary and aims to establish this state as a place "...where diversity is embraced and celebrated, and where everyone has the same opportunities to participate in the life of the community ... as all other citizens of Victoria".

Tragically, this Plan is failing, primarily due to a lack of government funding.

The service system has been chronically under-funded for the past fifteen years, and an injection of a minimum of **\$70 million** is urgently needed to address the present crisis.ⁱⁱⁱ The impact on people with disabilities, their carers, families, and service providers is severe, and will escalate further if underfunding is not immediately addressed to prevent service cuts or closures.

Tens of thousands of Victorians are missing out on the level of care and support they need to live comfortably and to participate in the community to their full potential^{iv}. In some cases, Victorians with disabilities are living without access to any support services at all. This is an inexcusable way to treat members of our community who have real need of our support and inclusion. It is also an appalling waste of human potential.

With the right care and support, Victorians with disabilities can – *and do* – contribute to all aspects of community life – through the economy and business, through sport and education, through the arts, politics and community service.

It is time to commit to real action and resources for positive change. It is time to **adequately fund the services which support people with a disability.**

Three sure steps will create strong services to support people living with a disability.

STEP 1: CHOICE

People with a disability must be given a real say in the design of services which meet their individual needs, and be provided with choices and opportunities which enable their quality of life.

This means:

- **Timely intervention** so that those affected by a disability receive supports and services as early as possible, to have the best prospects of achieving their full potential. The economic efficiency of this approach has been shown many times over across health, child development and employment.
- **A healthy service system** which can provide a range of options, rather than one that is in crisis and struggles to keep up with demand.
- **Individual Support Packages (ISPs)** funded at a sufficient level and quantity to ensure a decent quality of life for people with a disability. The Disability Support Register indicates that **in June 2009, more than 1000 Victorians were waiting for Individual Support Packages to live in the community.**^v As a member of the Coalition for Disability Rights, NDS calls for the range of measures to improve Disability Supports outlined in the 'Call to Parties 2010 State Election' document^{vi}.
- **Housing Options** in line with those available to the rest of the community. NDS calls for a commitment to continued investment in public, community and shared supported housing for people with a disability, as described in the Coalition for Disability Rights 'Call to Parties'. **There are at least 1,300 Victorians waiting for supported accommodation today**^{vii}.

STEP 2: SUSTAINABILITY

There must be a significant increase in investment in disability services, to reflect the role and true cost of delivering these services which play a key part in quality of life for people with a disability. These services include day supports, respite, and therapy.

Critical issues are that:

- Community organisations support tens of thousands of people with a disability. **The Government relies on such organisations to deliver quality services, yet does not**

fully fund these supports. This is at odds with the recent Productivity Commission recommendation that services commissioned by government must be fully funded^{viii}. It creates an unstable and fragile system, placing impossible demands on fundraising and forcing shoestring efficiencies to just deliver basic human rights.

- Immediate additional funding of at least **\$70 million** is required for a system that is increasingly unstable due to significant long-term underfunding^{ix}.
 - Conservative estimates show day supports are underfunded by 10.5%, estimated at **\$20,500,000**; respite services by 8.0%, estimated at **\$4,500,000**; and a **37% funding shortfall** exists between therapy in the disability setting compared with Home and Community Care. The introduction of self-directed approaches and individualisation has increased costs by an estimated **\$25 million**, which has not flowed on to support organisations.
 - A fully funded transition plan is essential to support the sector to achieve the changes required under the Victorian Government's State Disability Plan (2002-12). This Plan has been in place for eight years now without investment in structural adjustment. Investment of **\$20 million** is required to ensure organisations are able to deliver these services in the new environment and attract, recruit, train and retain, high quality staff^x.
- On top of these currently unfunded areas, the Government is introducing portable long service leave to the disability sector **without fully funding the costs, creating an intolerable additional cost burden on many disability services.** If Government is going to impose costs on community organisations, it must cover those costs. If not, services to some of our most vulnerable Victorians will have to be cut.

STEP 3: SOCIAL INCLUSION

True social inclusion requires a welcoming community and integrated and community-based facilities which connect people with a disability to communities and social settings.

This means:

- **Capital funding** for the creation, renewal and replacement of community facilities which welcome people with a disability into society, and bring other members of the community into the same service environments. The estimated cost is **\$40 million**, on the basis of \$5 million per DHS region.
- **Education of the broader community:** Government has a vital role to play in the education of the broader community about the difficulties and isolation that people with disabilities face daily. We need a comprehensive, multi media education campaign^{xi} which enables Victorians to recognise and value the contribution of people with a disability. Such a campaign would cost up to **\$4 million** and deliver a major return in social capital.

NDS VICTORIA IS CALLING FOR

CHOICES which enable quality of life for people with a disability and their families through early intervention, in particular support packages and housing.

SUSTAINABILITY in the provision of services and supports through funding of the true cost.

SOCIAL INCLUSION of people with a disability into the general community through improved infrastructure and investment in community awareness.

Immediate Government Funding Required

To Sustain Services and Support Individual Choice

Day supports	\$20.5 million (recurrent)
Respite funding (centre based)	\$4.5 million (recurrent)
Therapy funding	Parity with HACC rates
Impact of self-directed service model	\$25 million (recurrent)
Funded Transition Plan	\$20 million

For Social Inclusion

Capital funding	\$40 million
Education Campaign	\$4 million

ⁱ Recent trends indicate growth in demand for specialist disability services of 7.5% per annum in real terms. Disability Investment Group, *The Way Forward*, FAHCSIA 2009, see http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/pubs/policy/way_forward/Documents/part2.htm

ⁱⁱ For further information on the campaign to introduce a no-fault insurance scheme for everyone who has, or acquires a significant disability, see <http://www.ndis.org.au>

ⁱⁱⁱ Based on two price reviews. the DHS commissioned *Price Review Out of Home Disability Services Report 2009* and the industry sponsored review Saward Dawson, 2009..
On the basis of these reviews, NDS estimates a shortfall well in excess of \$25m when taking into account the underfunding of therapy services.

In addition, the introduction of self-directed approaches and individualisation is costing the sector an estimated \$25 million. This figure reflects the comment in the Saward Dawson 2009 report 'if initial assessments are accurate, individualisation may cost between \$25 and \$40 million'.

^{iv} The Disability Investment Group 2009, see http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/news/Pages/disability_investgroup_report.aspx argued that there remains a large and rapidly growing unmet need for care and support across Australia. This is despite an estimated 2.5 million family members and other carers providing unpaid care and support. In Victoria the Disability Support Register is an inadequate indicator of unmet and under-met demand. However it indicates that in June 2009 there were 1292 people awaiting Shared Supported Accommodation options; 188 awaiting daytime activities; and 1095 awaiting Individual Support Packages.

^v Ref:
http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/supports_for_people/information_planning_and_advocacy/how-we-provide-services-to-people#june2009

^{vi} The Coalition for Disability Rights brings together people with a disability, families, carers, advocacy bodies and disability support providers to work together to ensure that people with a disability and their families have a the right to be fully participating citizens of Australia. Partners include NDS, The Association for Children with a Disability (ACD); Carers Victoria; and Victorian Disability Advocacy Network (VDAN). See the Coalition's Call to the Parties 2010 State Election on <http://www.nds.org.au>

^{vii} The Disability Support Register indicates that in June 2009 there were 1292 people awaiting Shared Supported Accommodation options in Victoria.

^{viii} *Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector*, Productivity Commission Research Report, January 2010, recommendation 11.1, p290.

^{ix} See endnote iii for financial details.

^x Major structural adjustment is required to transition the disability service system to the new model of self-directed approaches, with delivery of services in the community, increased formal collaboration between service providers, and adjustment of business systems to reflect the new model. A conservative estimate of cost is \$20 million.

^{xi} The NSW government recently funded NDS NSW for the CareCareers campaign Ref: <http://www.carecareers.com.au>. This has a strong workforce recruitment focus, but included television advertisements and other media materials aimed at changing community attitudes towards people with a disability.