

Disability system is broken in Queensland

The hopes of Queenslanders with a disability and their families have been dashed by the oft-repeated statement of this Government: "We can't afford it!"

Carol Holt - [The Courier-Mail](#) - June 21, 2012 ([LINK](#))

While agreeing in principle to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Queensland Government has steadily refused to participate in it, saying it is the Federal Government's responsibility to fully fund it. All other Australian states have agreed to contribute the required 22 per cent to start the rollout of support to people with a disability, with the Federal Government funding the rest.

In late-2011, PricewaterhouseCoopers reported that, without the NDIS, the current national disability expenditure of \$7 billion a year would blow out to \$45 billion annually by 2035. It would therefore seem evident that the cost of disability for Queensland will continue to grow and grow unless we put in place some "insurance" for the future. Can we afford not to be part of the NDIS?

Currently only about 20 per cent of people with a disability receive State Government-funded support, which means a large majority of the remaining 80 per cent are struggling daily to survive. Without the support of their families and friends, many would find themselves inappropriately placed in aged-care facilities or, worse, homeless.

It is inconceivable to the Community Safeguards Coalition, which represents a large constituency of people with disabilities and their families throughout Queensland, that the Queensland Government has decided not to participate in the NDIS - the greatest reform Australia has undertaken for people with disabilities and their families.

The NDIS is an entirely different model of support for people with a disability. It is an insurance model - it means that if you are born with a disability or you acquire a disability, then support is assured.

This is not the current situation in Queensland, where you may be eligible but that doesn't mean you will automatically get government assistance. If Queensland does not agree to be part of the NDIS, the situation will remain as it is now, where getting support is like winning the lotto.

Queenslanders with disabilities and their families are tired - they have waited for a very long time for this reform which offers long-term support and security.

They had and still have high expectations the new Government will show leadership to take up the challenge of disability reform.

What is the Newman Government's alternative vision for people with disabilities and their families in Queensland? With an average per capita spend on supporting people with disabilities less than the national average, it is widely acknowledged the system is badly broken and in need of immediate remedial intervention.

We call on the Queensland Government to provide access to the same funding and opportunities available to people with disabilities in other states.

This is not a political or economic issue, it is a citizenship issue for all people with a disability to have their full citizenship rights realised. It is time people with disabilities were heard and their rights not just acknowledged, but implemented. It is time for action and commitment to change.

Carol Holt is the chairperson of the Community Safeguards Coalition.

LISA Comment: NDIS is far from a reality! Federal funding doesn't extend beyond 2014. The Federal Government is not able to commit beyond the initial four launch sites until negotiations conclude with the States and Territories, and they've raised concerns about how they will fund their share.

The Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott, recently re-affirmed the Coalition's commitment to the NDIS as recommended by the Productivity Commission in a letter to disability organisations and advocacy groups. But it may be a far different story if they gain government!

Politicians have far more popular things to spend money on than NDIS. The best we can hope for is a very watered-down version of NDIS - Just a little more of what we have now, but a long way down the time track, perhaps.

We are advised that what there is now in Queensland, is not good - Self protective with poor service outcome accountability and a poor complaints process. And, reluctance to fund/implement anything better, it seems.

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