

NDIS going down, down, down and out!

Adelaide Advertiser's, David Jean & Ken McGregor say,
'Less Support for the disabled' - March 2, 2012

The estimated cost of a full National Disability Insurance Scheme has blown out by \$1.5 billion a year, prompting fears there will be fewer eligible people receiving lower benefits.

The Advertiser can reveal the estimated cost has ballooned from \$6.5 to \$8 billion as a result of Fair Work Australia's decision to deliver disability sector workers a pay rise of 19 to 41 per cent.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard only this week staked her leadership credentials on delivering the scheme.

The Productivity Commission had previously estimated the scheme, which would provide lifelong support and care for disabled people, would cost \$6.5 billion a year.

Disability Reform Minister Jenny Macklin confirmed "preliminary costing" of the scheme now had reached \$8 billion.

"We still need to work out critical elements of a scheme's design, such as eligibility for support under an NDIS and what a support package may look like," she said.

Intellectual Disability Association of SA chairman David Hoist said it was clear the Government was looking at ways to water down a scheme it had heralded as a key plank of its term, 'The fact that it has gone out by so much and they haven't put it out in the public forum is unacceptable because they keep talking about it,' he said. "We understand the Government is trying to write a strategy that is going to reduce the number of people that get support and that those people are going to get less support."

Mr Hoist also took aim at the Gillard Government's failure to deliver a key recommendation of the productivity commission's report by immediately pumping funds into badly-needed supported accommodation services.

The Advertiser yesterday revealed the number of South Australians in critical need of those services had more than doubled since mid-2009.

Despite confirming the cost blowout, Ms Macklin said the Government was committed to delivering the "foundations necessary for an NDIS by mid-2013".

Opposition spokesman Mitch Fifield said the Government should publicly release any modelling that had been done on the effect of the community sector pay case on the scheme.

"The time for the Government to match its fine words on the NDIS with action... is well overdue," he said.

LISA Comment: The NDIS is now well behind the eight-ball! Behind a national dental scheme, more money for education, very extensive flood damage compensation in three states, a budget surplus, etc, etc.

Without question the main intention of the NDIS was/is to provide the level of funding to ensure relief for those aging parents still caring for their adult family member at home.

This priority is closely followed by the intention of a full NDIS was/is to give disadvantaged people choice of service provider. Get them out of the charity hand-out trap, into the freedom of 'right to services of their choice'.

There is little human-right, where consumers and their families are treated like they were bludgers who must show respect and beg forgiveness if they ever speak out of turn, especially those in government direct service provision. One of the main intentions of the NDIS was to break this strangle-hold.

Now with little hope of this ever occurring in the near future, it is the duty of every person with a disability, their family, friends and the public to help us break the indignity of services which do not treat the consumer, their family and friends as the most important people - the people who should be treated with good customer service as always right. Market place industry treats their customers as always right, as they know their customers have choice of service provider.