

**A FAIR GO FOR PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY AND THEIR CARERS**

Kevin Rudd **and Labor**

A New Way



A FAIR GO FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND THEIR CARERS

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Overview

This Federal Labor Government is delivering for Australians with disability, their families and carers after a decade of neglect by the Liberal Government.

We believe that people with disability, their families and carers deserve the same opportunities as other Australians to participate in the community, and access better education and employment opportunities so they can achieve their goals and aspirations.

We are serious about giving people with disability and their carers a fair go.

Just like Labor delivered Medicare, Labor is delivering DisabilityCare.

DisabilityCare Australia, the national disability insurance scheme, is the largest ever reform of Australia's disability support system and the most significant social reform since Medicare.

DisabilityCare has already started under Labor.

When fully rolled out, it will deliver more support to around 460,000 people with disability, their families and carers, and give people with disability more choice and control over how they receive this support.

DisabilityCare is also an economic reform that will create jobs, and unlock the productivity of people with disability and their carers.

Labor knows that we must support the most vulnerable in our society.

DisabilityCare will give all Australians the peace of mind that if they or their loved ones acquire a disability, the support they need will be there.

DisabilityCare builds on Federal Labor's major disability reforms over two terms of government to improve the social and economic participation of people with disability and their carers.

These reforms include boosting funding for specialist disability services, early intervention services for children with disability, and supported accommodation, historic pension increases, the National Disability Strategy and National Carers Strategy, uncapping Disability Employment services and record levels of investment in education for students with disability.

Labor is committed to ensuring that people with disability are not treated like second class citizens by upholding their human rights – everyone is entitled to equal opportunities to participate, and to be free from discrimination in our workplaces, services and communities.

A re-elected Rudd Labor Government will continue to build on these reforms to give people with disability, their families and carers a fair go.

What the Federal Labor Government has achieved so far

After a decade of neglect under the former Coalition Government, Federal Labor has put disability on the national agenda and delivered the most significant reform to disability support ever.

Labor delivers DisabilityCare Australia

Labor recognises that for too long Australia's disability support systems have failed to provide people with disability, their families and carers with the support they need.

We heard the calls from people with disability, their families and carers who told us that fundamental reform was required.

In 2009, **Labor commissioned the Productivity Commission's inquiry** into disability care and support. This inquiry found that the disability care and support systems in the states and territories were "unfair, underfunded, fragmented and inefficient."

The inadequacy of these systems meant hundreds of thousands of Australians with disability weren't receiving the support they need. And the supports people were receiving weren't tailored to their individual needs and lives.

Federal Labor acted on the Productivity Commission's recommendation for a national disability insurance scheme and established DisabilityCare Australia which started this year.

Federal Labor has taken the responsible steps needed to deliver this major reform with:

- **National legislation** that provides the framework for the national scheme, including eligibility to access DisabilityCare.
- An **independent agency** to manage and operate the scheme – DisabilityCare Australia.
- **Agreements with all states and territories** to start rolling out DisabilityCare.
- Landmark investment in the 2013-14 Budget of **more than \$14 billion over seven years** on top of existing Commonwealth disability services funding to roll out DisabilityCare Australia across the whole country by 2019.
- **Long-term funding certainty and security** through an increase to the Medicare Levy by 0.5 per cent from July 2014, and additional structural savings including superannuation and private health insurance reforms to help pay for DisabilityCare.

DisabilityCare launched in four sites on 1 July this year and three more will start on 1 July next year in Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, covering more than 30,000 people with disability by 2016.

Over the coming years, DisabilityCare Australia will replace Australia's broken disability services system with a scheme that provides around **460,000 Australians with disability** with the care and support they need over their lifetimes.

It will give more control to people with disability to manage their own supports – as well as more choice about how those supports are provided.

And it will provide all Australians with the certainty they will be properly supported if they or their loved ones are born with or acquire a disability.

Labor's historic investment in DisabilityCare will also significantly expand the disability services sector – creating new, skilled job opportunities for Australian workers.

Expert advice commissioned by the Rudd Labor Government estimates that DisabilityCare could **create up to 90,000 new jobs across Australia**, more than doubling the existing disability workforce between now and 2020.

Investing in specialist disability services and accommodation

Delivering DisabilityCare Australia was made possible because of the significant investments Federal Labor had already made for specialist disability services.

Since coming into government in 2007, Federal Labor has:

- Doubled disability funding to the states and territories under the National Disability Agreement. Our contribution now totals \$7.2 billion over 6 years, including **\$1.2 billion in 2013-14**.
 - This compares to just **\$620 million** in the last year of the Howard Government (2006-07).
- Provided the **highest ever level of indexation** from a Commonwealth Government for state and territory run disability services.
 - In comparison, **funding for disability services went backwards** in real terms under the Howard Government.
- Invested an additional **\$160 million in capital funding to build supported accommodation** for people with disability, on top of our funding to the states under the National Disability Agreement.
- Built more than **16,000 new homes** under Labor's social housing initiative that incorporate six minimum universal design elements to make properties more accessible to people with disabilities – more than 80 per cent of all new social housing homes built under this program.
- The latest round of our **National Rental Affordability Scheme** preferences projects that meet the needs of people with a disability – this round will deliver a further 10,000 affordable homes, to be delivered by 30 June 2016.
- Provided more than **\$350 million which has helped around 31,000 children with disability** get early intervention support, such as speech pathology, physiotherapy and audiology, through our successful *Helping Children with Autism* and *Better Start for Children with Disability* programs.
- Invested an unprecedented **\$2.2 billion to support people with mental illness through our National Mental Health Reforms**, including funding for 425 extra personal helpers and mentors to support people with mental health in community settings and to establish 40 new Family Mental Health Support Services.

And importantly, Federal Labor has provided around **\$3 billion to fund wage increases** for community sector workers, including disability workers, to help attract and retain staff to the sector.

Labor's National Disability Strategy

DisabilityCare and specialist disability services are a major reform – and they are only part of our plan to give Australians with disability a fair go.

The National Disability Strategy developed by this Labor Government with disability advocates is a ten year framework to improve the inclusion and participation of people with disability right across our community.

It recognises that governments have a role in helping improve access and inclusion for people with disability in a range of mainstream community settings and services, as well as in specialist disability services.

The Strategy sets out a plan for all governments to address the barriers to full participation faced by Australians with disability and to ensure mainstream services and programs, including healthcare, housing, transport and education, address the needs of people with disability.

The Strategy was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments in 2011 and earlier this year, the Commonwealth and state and territory governments endorsed the implementation report for the Strategy.

To support the National Disability Strategy, Federal Labor has delivered a range of practical accessibility initiatives including:

- \$6 million to assist **local governments to make communities more accessible** for people with disability through community infrastructure projects in swimming pools, libraries, playgroups and public toilets right across Australia.
- \$3 million over four years to **support leadership development** for people with disability.
- \$1 million over three years to **promote liveable housing design** and deliver **Disability Standards Access to Premises** which, for the first time, set the minimum access requirements for people with a disability to public buildings.
- Investment in **cinema access** to allow more people with disability to participate in these community activities.
- A new opinion and news website, **'Ramp up'**, run by people with disability, for people with disability.

Delivering on disability rights

Federal Labor has championed the National Disability Strategy as the key avenue for Australia to implement obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, since 2007 Labor has progressed a number of other important disability rights initiatives including:

- **Becoming a party to both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and its Optional Protocol.
- Enabling the Australian Human Rights Commission to inquire into the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Making improvements to the Disability Discrimination Act.
- **Initiating a new inquiry by the Australian Law Reform Commission** to consider whether Commonwealth laws and legal frameworks create barriers to people with disability exercising their rights and legal capacity.

Labor has also strengthened the voice of the disability sector by establishing the **National People with Disability and Carers Council**, which includes a diverse range of people with disability, carers, advocates and representatives from the disability sector.

Federal Labor has a strong commitment to the **disability advocacy** sector, and our funding of more than \$16 million a year through the National Disability Advocacy Program, supports around 60 grassroots advocacy organisations.

As part of our commitment to DisabilityCare, Federal Labor has:

- **Established a new division of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal** to provide a robust and independent review mechanism.
- **Provided an extra \$2.5 million** to the National Disability Advocacy Program to ensure that all DisabilityCare recipients can access disability advocacy support to assist them through the review process.

Employment for people with disability

Since coming to government, Labor has reformed employment services for people with disability to improve quality and deliver access to more people. We have:

- **Abolished cruel caps and quotas** on specialist disability employment services – resulting in a 46 per cent increase in the number of people receiving services.
- Achieved a **100 per cent increase** in the number of people securing jobs through our services, compared to the previous program.
- Provided greater choice, better services and more options to job seekers.
- Introduced new specialist services and increased the number of **specialist mental health services**, to better meet the needs of the community.
- Expanded the services of **top quality four and five star providers** to reach more people.

As a result of our record **\$3.2 billion investment**, more people with disability than ever before will have access to Disability Employment Services. This investment has also provided an additional 500 services sites across the nation – bringing the total number to over 1,650. 50 of these sites in areas where Disability Employment Services have never been provided before.

Since we introduced it in 2010, Disability Employment Services has already helped more than **150,000 Australians** with disability realise their potential – and provided a boost to our economy.

Students with disability

The Rudd Labor Government believes in the transformative effect of students with disability accessing education opportunities just like any other student.

That's why we introduced the More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership – investing **\$200 million extra to specifically to support students with a disability** in 2012 and 2013.

We are building on that investment through Labor's once in a generation reforms to schooling, the *Better Schools Plan*. As part of our plan, a new fairer funding model will be in place from 2014 in all states and territories that sign up.

This model will provide extra funding for students with a disability to ensure they can reach their full potential.

The *Better Schools Plan* will:

- Introduce a dedicated funding stream – the students with disability loading – regardless of the type of school the child attends.
- Provide a fair and transparent way to allocate funding for students with disability based on need for the very first time.
- Deliver extra funding to support an inclusive school culture and improved results for students with disability.
- Ensure teachers are trained to ensure they meet the needs of children with a disability.

The full students with disability loading will be in place from 2015, with an interim loading in place in 2014.

All governments are also working together to conduct national data collection so we can identify students with disability and understand what support they need. This will inform the delivery of the students with disability loading.

Federal Labor has also extended the very popular More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative into 2014 at a cost of **\$100 million**.

In addition, Federal Labor has announced that an extra **\$76 million** will be provided over the next six years to government and non-government special schools as part of the *Better Schools Plan*.

Financial security for people with disability and carers

Federal Labor's historic pension reforms have increased the incomes of more than a million carers and people with disability. Since our reforms were implemented in 2009:

- The Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment have **increased by \$207 a fortnight** for single pensioners and \$236 a fortnight for pensioner couples on the maximum rate.
- **Improved indexation arrangements** ensure that these payments continue to rise with the cost of living.
- Around 500,000 carers now receive an annual and ongoing **\$600 Carer Supplement** for each person they care for.

Labor has also implemented a series of reforms to the Disability Support Pension (DSP) to improve the assessment process and encourage greater participation in employment by DSP recipients.

Our reforms have shown strong signs of success, stemming the growth in the number of people receiving DSP so that it is targeted to those who need it, and encouraging thousands of DSP recipients to increase their hours of work.

Support for Carers

We recognise the vital role that carers of people with disability play in our communities.

Under DisabilityCare Australia, many carers of people with disability will receive more support to help them in their caring role, creating opportunities for carers to increase their participation in the community and in employment.

This extra support will build on Federal Labor's **National Carer Recognition Framework**, which acknowledges the vital social and economic contribution that carers make to Australian society. The National Carer Recognition Framework comprises two pillars: the Carer Recognition Act 2010 and the National Carer Strategy.

The Carer Recognition Act 2010 includes the important principle that carers should have the same rights, choices and opportunities as other Australians.

Australia's first National Carer Strategy, launched by Federal Labor in August 2011, is supported by a \$60 million package of initiatives, which **improve the financial security of carers** and have raised **public awareness** of the role and contribution of carers.

New funding being delivered under the National Carer Strategy includes:

- Over \$40 million to extend automatic eligibility for the Carer Allowance (child) to carers of children with Type 1 Diabetes aged between 10 and 16 years.
- Around \$10 million to continue the Carer Adjustment Payment.
- Almost \$3 million to improve access to the Carer Supplement for carers who are working when the Supplement is paid in July each year, and \$2 million to ensure fairer access for carers to Bereavement Payment.
- Funding for a national and targeted campaign to raise awareness of the role of carers.

The strategy builds on Labor's first term reforms for carers including more **respite, peer support** and **outside school hours care** for families caring for children and young people with disability, and **more flexible leave arrangements** for carers under the new Fair Work Act, and new rules to make it easier for **carers of children with severe disability or medical conditions** to get income support.

Labor has also recognised the importance of providing support to carers of people with mental illness, including through our expansion of our community Mental Health Respite: Carer Support program as part of our National Mental Health Reforms.

A re-elected Rudd Labor Government

- **The Rudd Labor Government will roll-out DisabilityCare Australia across the whole country by 2019.**

Federal Labor has announced the locations in New South Wales and Queensland that if re-elected, a Rudd Labor Government will support to be among the first to roll-out the scheme beyond the launch sites from July 2016.

The locations we have chosen all have a high level of need for services for people with disability, and represent a mixture of metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

Federal Labor has also announced that we will support the next phase of the roll-out in Tasmania to be for children from birth to 14 years.

We will work closely with each of the state governments on these roll-out plans.

We will continue involving people with disability, their families, carers and representatives every step of the way. We will ensure groups of people with disability facing extra challenges, such as those from an Indigenous or culturally and linguistically diverse background, can fully benefit from the scheme.

- **The Rudd Labor Government will establish a new Closing the Gap target on disability service provision to Indigenous people with disability.**

Our target will be that by 2020, 90 per cent of eligible Indigenous people with disability will be covered by DisabilityCare Australia.

In 2012, Labor funded and launched Australia's first national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability – the First People's Disability Network. In 2013, we provided additional funding to the First People's Disability Network to assist Indigenous Australians to understand and access support from DisabilityCare Australia.

- **The Rudd Labor Government will deliver a new \$30 million Skilling for Better Services initiative for an extra 5,800 training places over the next two years to build the skills of community service workers, including disability workers.**

Expert analysis estimates there could be up to 90,000 new Australian jobs created by 2020 as a result of DisabilityCare - more than doubling the size of the existing disability workforce.

The workforce required will include disability support workers and attendant carers, nurses and allied health professionals, case managers and service managers.

Labor will also:

- Establish a **Disability Workforce National Consultative Forum** led by Commissioner Barbara Deegan from Fair Work Australia to advise the government on workforce needs as we roll out DisabilityCare.
- Develop a **national workforce strategy** to guide the disability workforce requirements for DisabilityCare Australia.

These commitments build on Labor's **\$120 million Sector Development Fund** as part of the transition to DisabilityCare Australia, to help service providers and people prepare for the scheme and strengthen the disability workforce.

- **A re-elected Rudd Government will provide an additional \$1.5 million a year for disability advocacy as we roll out DisabilityCare Australia.**

Labor is committed to continuing advocacy as we roll-out DisabilityCare Australia, and we believe it needs to be independently funded and delivered to uphold the rights of people with disability.

Labor acknowledges that a strong and secure funding base for disability advocacy is critical to the success of DisabilityCare and the National Disability Strategy.

A re-elected Rudd Government will increase Commonwealth investment in independent disability advocacy and representation by \$1.5 million a year and will work with the disability sector to determine where the highest needs are.

- **The Rudd Government will implement the National Disability Strategy to deliver real improvements for people with disability across all six priority areas.**

Labor has established a National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group consisting of key disability representatives and is committed to using this group's advice to determine the detailed approach to getting the most benefit from the implementation of the strategy.

- **A re-elected Rudd Government will provide \$3 million to make playgrounds accessible for kids with disability.**

Building on Federal Labor's successful Accessible Communities initiative, a re-elected Rudd Labor Government would provide \$3 million to help build or upgrade around 30 community playgrounds nationally so they are accessible for children with disability.

From 1 July 2014, local councils would be able to apply for grants of up to \$100,000 to build or upgrade inclusive playgrounds around the country for all Australian children to enjoy.

To be eligible to receive a grant, local councils would need to commit to match the funding and comply with the Accessible Play Guidelines.

Funding these accessible playgrounds will deliver on the core aims of the National Disability Strategy by helping children with disability access the same opportunities as other Australian children to play, explore and socialise.

It will also provide spaces that parents and carers of children with disability can feel confident will be safe and beneficial for the children, and create opportunities for them to make contact with other carers.

- **A Rudd Labor Government will invest a further \$1 million to expand the MyTime Peer Support program for Parents and Carers of Children with Disability.**

The successful Labor MyTime Peer Support program already provides a support network to more than 3,000 parents and carers of children with disability or chronic medical condition aged up to 16 years, through 262 groups across Australia.

A re-elected Rudd Government will invest a further \$1 million over three years in the MyTime program to expand the program into up to 20 new locations that receive funding for an accessible community playground as part of Federal Labor's commitment. New accessible playgrounds will provide excellent places for carers for kids with disability to get together and share experiences.

We will also work with the existing MyTime program on boosting funding for high needs groups, such as those that deliver services to Indigenous people or people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- **A Rudd Labor Government will continue our record levels of investment in specialist disability services while we transition to DisabilityCare Australia.**

The Federal Labor Government will maintain our record level of funding for disability services while we transition to DisabilityCare Australia.

This includes the historic levels of growth funding Labor introduced under the National Disability Agreement, and the full range of disability and carer programs funded by the Commonwealth including Labor's successful Helping Children with Autism and Better Start for Children with Disability programs.

- **A Rudd Labor Government will ensure an adequate and sustainable safety net into the future for disability pensioners and carers.**

Under a Labor Government, the Disability Support Pension is and will remain an essential part of our social safety net for those people with disability who need it.

Pensions and the Carer Payment will continue to be indexed under Labor's improved indexation arrangements so that they keep up with the cost of living.

And Labor's Household Assistance Payments for people with disability and carers are here to stay, including the Essential Medical Equipment Payment.

- **Under Federal Labor's *Better Schools Plan*, extra funding for schools to support every student with disability will be delivered through a disability loading for schools funding in 2015, with an interim disability loading starting in 2014.**
- **Labor will deliver \$100 million to More Support for Students with Disabilities for the 2014 school year following our previous investment of \$200 million for 2012 and 2013.**

At the heart of Labor's *Better Schools Plan* is a new, fairer school funding approach based on the needs of individual students, including the individual needs of students with disability.

The *Better Schools Plan* will see students with disability properly funded in every school for the first time.

- **Labor will fund new specialist counsellors for young carers, with additional funding of \$1.5 million over three years.**

A re-elected Rudd Labor Government will fund new specialist counsellors to work directly with around 1,000 additional young carers each year.

Carers Australia estimates that there are around 360,000 Australians between the ages of 15 and 25 who are caring for a family member with a disability or mental illness.

The Rudd Government provides around \$5 million a year in funding to Carers Australia and state carers organisations for the National Carer Counselling Program and the National Mental Health Counselling Program. A re-elected Rudd Government will expand this existing support with dedicated new counselling services for young carers.

This commitment builds on:

- Recent funding of \$250,000 provided to Carers Australia by Federal Labor to train around 100 counsellors to better respond to the needs, concerns and aspirations of our young carers.
- The Federal Labor Government's \$8 million a year Young Carers Program that helps young carers at risk of not finishing school.

The Liberal Party's Record

For 12 years, the former Coalition Government turned their back on people with disability and their carers, while demand for disability services grew and living costs rose.

Under the Coalition, funding for disability services was cut in real terms.

- Under the former Coalition government, Commonwealth funding for disability services went backward - it grew at only 1.8 per cent a year, less than the rate of inflation.
- In contrast, the Federal Labor Government has provided the highest ever level of indexation to the states for disability services of over 5 per cent every year (5.7 per cent in 2013-14).
- In 2007 under the former Coalition Government, the Commonwealth's contribution to the states and territories was only \$620 million. In 2013-14, investment under the Federal Labor Government will be more \$1.2 billion.

The Coalition refused to increase the pension or give disability pensioners and carers the Utilities Allowance.

They capped access to employment services so that many people with disability had to wait more than a year to get employment assistance.

The Coalition has refused to lock in full funding for DisabilityCare Australia even though they say they support the scheme.

Mr Abbott has committing to 'fully restoring' the private health insurance rebate, but private health insurance structural savings are part of Labor's reforms to fund DisabilityCare for the long-term, leaving it unclear how Tony Abbott would fund DisabilityCare.