

A Liberal Party Plan For A Better Deal For Victorians With Disabilities

The Liberal Party believes that it is necessary to go beyond the rhetoric and streamline the way in which services for the disabled are planned, funded and delivered, making it easier for people with a disability and their families and carers to navigate the system in order to maximise options.

Policy Objectives

A Liberal Government will:

- Put the needs of people with disabilities before process and bureaucracy
- Enhance disability services and the delivery of those services
- Develop the institutions and legislation to protect and nurture the rights of people with disabilities
- Cut useless and wasteful bureaucratic regulation in the sector
- Give carers greater representation both within Government and the community
- Recognise the important role played by carers in our society
- Emphasis a flexible approach to respite
- Support carers in their role and give access to services, programs and workforce opportunities
- Build on the existing standard of services, support and approaches provided for care and carers

Labor's Failings

Labor has:

- Ignored the needs of people with disabilities and their families
- Excluded people with disabilities and their families from the decision making process
- Eroded families' rights to access services and the exclusion of families from the consultative process
- Failed to gear the disability service system to meet the needs of individuals but fit the individual to the system
- Added to the bureaucratic confusion in the disability sector
- Established a system of confusing multiple programs not logically linked
- Failed in providing flexible respite
- Failed to provide out-of-home or facility based respite options which provide real respite for families and carers, focussing instead on in-home-support which provides little real relief

- Failed to adequately fund critical components of the disability program, for example Respite Services and Care and Support packages
- Failed to fund shared supported accommodation
- Failed to adequately fund critical components of the disability program, such as Shared Supported Accommodation, Respite Services and Care and Support packages
- Failed people with Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD)
- Discriminated against ASD who do not have an intellectual disability
- Not provided professional development or training for people dealing with ASD
- Cut the Multi Purpose Taxi Program

A Liberal Government will:

- Provide \$40.4 million to improve and develop shared supported accommodation facilities
- Providing an additional \$4 million to support the provision of nappies for eligible disabled children and young people with incontinence
- Provide \$4.8 million for vehicle modifications for children and young adults with a profound or severe disability
- Review the Disability Bill to include and recognise carers and in proper consultation with all relevant stakeholders
- Develop separate legislation for children and young people with disabilities
- Establish an Ombudsman for Ageing Carers and Disability
- Investigate the use of the World Health Organisations International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health as the framework for tackling the disadvantages associated with disability
- Establish individual planning for people with a disability
- Replace the terminology 'Case Manager' with 'Service Facilitator'
- Develop a funding model delivers services driven by client needs not disability level or type
- Remove the unfair cap on the Multi Purpose Taxi Program placed on the scheme by Labor
- Cut the bureaucracy, simplify the system and create links between Federal and State services to allow families to easily access the services they need

Supported Accommodation

Shared supported accommodation has the ability to enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities while also supporting opportunities and experiences that foster personal growth and independence.

The Liberal Party understands the importance of this service for both people with a disability and their families.

The Liberal Party believes it is important to provide flexibility and choice in accommodation and for this reason wishes to develop Shared Residential Services together with improving the current conditions of Community Residential Units.

A Liberal Government will provide \$40.4 million to:

- Improve and develop shared supported accommodation facilities
- Fund improvement for existing Community Residential Units
- Develop Shared Residential Services to provide greater choice for disabled persons and their families

Community organizations can play a greater role in assisting Government to increase residential accommodation for people with disabilities.

As part of the supported accommodation program, a Liberal Government will:

- Provide \$200,000 to Winaccom to complete the pilot program into supported accommodation for young people with an intellectual disability

Modified Vehicles

The Liberal Party understands the difficulty of personal transport for families and people with disabilities.

A Liberal Government will:

- Subsidise vehicle modifications worth \$4.8 million for children and young adults with a profound or severe disability

Legislation

A Liberal Government will review the Disability Bill to recognise and include carers.

The Disability Bill which was passed in 2006 ignores carers and their rights. The Liberal Party believes it is essential to acknowledge carers and the role they play in assisting people with disabilities in our community.

The Liberal Party recognises the importance of facilitating linkages for children and young people, and their families and carers, with broad-based support networks including other service systems such as early childhood education and school education.

A Liberal Government will develop landmark legislation to establish separate disability legislation for children and young persons.

This initiative will recognise that children and young people with a disability, as well as their carers, have special needs.

Administration

The Liberal Party believes that the 'individual' should be at the very centre of providing service needs, service planning and service delivery for people with a disability.

A Liberal Government will:

- Investigate the use of the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health as a basis for assessing need and intervention

- Develop a funding model that delivers services driven by client needs not by disability level or type

Bureaucracy

People with disabilities, their families and carers are frequently overwhelmed by the maze that purports to be a disability service system. Not only do these people have to cope with the stress created by the disability itself, but they face in the system an artificially created maze of bureaucratic red-tape and roadblocks to service.

A Liberal Government will:

- Cut bureaucracy and simplify the system to allow families to easily access the services they need

Inter-Service Linkages

There is an immediate need to redesign the service system to provide logical linkages between services which are not overburdened with regulation and bureaucracy and ensure a set of sign posts that facilitate the navigation of the system by its users.

A Liberal Government will:

- Maximize departmental efficiency and reduce unnecessary overhead expenditure
- Minimize decision making and implementation times
- Ensure that consumers and providers are not forced to waste time, money and effort on competing for services and funds
- Ensure the disability service system will not stand alone as is currently the case
- Investigate the implementation of a Disability Directory Service to facilitate simplification for disability enquiries
- Integrate service planning and coordination for adults suffering Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) without an intellectual disability to help the increasing numbers of adults being diagnosed with ASD

Commonwealth and State Relations

The Liberal Party recognises that while there are several mechanisms by which people with disabilities and their families and carers can gain financial assistance there is much confusion about where this assistance can be gained and who is eligible.

A Liberal Government will:

- Open the lines of communication between State and Federal schemes for assistance which will reduce the confusion that surrounds the support network available for people with disabilities, their families and their carers

Multi Purpose Taxi Program

Instead of identifying those responsible for millions of dollars of fraudulent practices within the Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP), the Labor Government chose to place a cap on users of the system.

The effect of the cap has been to reduce mobility of many elderly, infirm and people with a severe physical disability. In regional Victoria, many elderly people have been effectively isolated in their homes.

A Liberal Government will:

- Remove the unfair cap on the MPTP placed on the scheme by Labor

The lifting of the cap is aimed to provide significant relief to many elderly people with disabilities and assist the taxi industry to provide a more reliable and broader service.

Carers

The Liberal Party recognises the integral role that carers play in the supporting the disabled. The Liberal Party understands that respite services and supports play a vital role in alleviating pressures on families and carers and in preventing escalation of needs. The Liberal Party also recognises the need for a spectrum of respite options to be available to meet the needs of people with disabilities and their families.

Currently accessing respite for carers and people with a disability is complex and time consuming. People wanting to access respite want certainty, flexibility and choice.

A Liberal Government will:

- Establish an Ombudsman for Carers and Aged Care as an independent body responsible for safeguarding the rights of people in care with the power to investigate allegations that standards are not sufficient
- Establish a Division of Carers, Ageing and Disability with a Minister dedicated to Carers, Ageing and Disability
- Introduce a coordinated approach operated on a regional basis to provide a one stop option for those trying to locate respite simply and accurately
- Ensure the head of the Division of Carers, Ageing and Disability is an ex-officio on the Heads of Department's Executive Committee
- Give patients continuum of care by ensuring that care pathways facilitate patient movement across care agencies
- Establish a Respite for Older Persons Program to help younger people who are becoming primary caregivers
- Provide additional funding for flexible planned regular or holiday and emergency respite both in and out of the person's home in metropolitan and regional centres
- Offer a range of individualised short-term respite support for primary caregivers specific to each person or the carers/families needs
- Recognise the high standard of palliative care provided and the key role of the State in the provision of such care
- Build on existing palliative services and standards across Victoria to integrate care systems to enable the seamless delivery of palliative care taking into account the triangle of acute and sub-acute inpatient care and community based home care
- Develop of a system of support to and for elderly primary carers of younger persons with disabilities. This system will see the review of the current

weighting of HACC services to the frail aged recipient, provision of access to respite services sufficient to enable rest and recuperation by elderly primary carers and the ability to continue for protracted periods of time

- Develop local neighbourhood support groups and build a network of mutual support for carer families, older people and disabled Victorians
- Amend the Disability Bill in consultation with carers and peak organisations to alleviate Labor's failure to include carers and the important role of family support into the Disability Bill
- Implement a policy of early educational intervention in care situations to promote carer and family capacity building

Incontinence Aids

The Liberal Party recognises the concern of incontinence in children and young people and realises that continence support products can place a significant financial burden on their families.

A Liberal Government will:

- Increase financial support for the provision of nappies for eligible disabled children and young people with incontinence by providing an additional \$4 million.

Policy Cost

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	TOTAL
Supported Accommodation	\$9.7m	\$10.0m	\$10.2m	\$10.5m	\$40.4m
Vehicle Modifications	\$1.1m	\$1.2m	\$1.2m	\$1.3m	\$4.8 m
Incontinence aids	\$0.9m	\$1.0m	\$1.0m	\$1.1m	\$4.0m
Total	\$11.7m	\$12.2m	\$12.4m	\$12.9m	\$49.2m

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