

# 2019 Federal Election

# Advocacy Kit for

# QDN Members and Supporters

The 2019 Federal election has been called for 18 May 2019, so we need to act fast to make sure our voices and disability issues are put firmly on the national agenda this election campaign.

QDN has called upon candidates to adopt the recommendations in this platform, to lead with vision, to listen and act together and, if successful, to begin the job of implementing the recommendation immediately after the election.

QDN’s federal election platform focuses on the responsibility of the Australian Government in delivering and funding essential accessible, affordable and quality government and community mainstream services to people with disability. This includes its critical role in leading full inclusion and participation of people with disability in economic, social, civic and cultural spheres of life.

QDN’s election platform identifies seven key areas of priority commitment we are seeking from candidates in the federal election. Please find attached QDN’s Federal Election Platform. These seven key areas of commitment are informed by:

* Our 2,000 strong membership and support base
* Our 21 [Local Support Groups](https://qdn.org.au/our-work/local-support-groups/) across the state
* QDN work and engagement with people with disability and their families in delivering the following projects and initiatives;

[NDIS Peer to Peer Advocacy](https://qdn.org.au/our-work/peer-to-peer-advocacy/)

[Changing Lives, Changing Communities](https://qdn.org.au/projects/changing-lives-changing-communities/)

[Getting on the NDIS Grid](https://qdn.org.au/our-work/getting-on-the-ndis-grid/)

[Ready to go NDIS Participant readiness project](https://qdn.org.au/our-work/ready-to-go/)

[Bright Sparks](https://qdn.org.au/hot-issues/energy/)

[QDN Housing Position Paper – Going for Gold: Accessible, Affordable Housing Now](https://qdn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/QDN-Going-for-gold-position-paper.pdf)

QDN’s seven election platform priorities are:

1. National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
2. Royal Commission into violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of people with disability
3. Housing
4. Transport
5. Health
6. Employment
7. National Disability Agreement and National Disability Strategy

# QDN’s Policy Platform

## National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

QDN calls for candidates to commit to:

* Urgent implementation of the [18 Progress Recommendations](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Disability_Insurance_Scheme/General_NDIS/Report/b02) in the [*Joint Standing on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Progress Report*](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Disability_Insurance_Scheme/General_NDIS/Report)
* Returning the national underspend into the NDIS and re-investing this funding into fixing the NDIS, including funding a range of approaches that deliver people ‘hands-on’ support to implement and manage their plans;
* Re-negotiating components of the bilateral arrangements with regards to Queensland’s investment in the NDIS, to ensure funding is available for the following initiatives:

a. Targeted strategies undertaken by non-government organisations to deliver specialist engagement with new participants, especially marginalised and vulnerable people with disability, to assist their access to, and participation in the scheme; and

b. Access to ‘hands on practical support’ for people with disability and their families; delivered through non-government organisations, once people are in the scheme. This will facilitate timely activation and implementation of plans. Alternatively, funding supports coordination and ensuring it focuses on capacity building and skill development.

* Urgent resolution of NDIS/mainstream issues in the areas of housing, health, mental health, the TSS and Community Transport;
* Improved flexibility around plan duration, including options to extend timeframes of plans to longer than 12 months, with review timeframes extended; implementing provider of last resort arrangements – Maintaining Critical Supports to ensure Queenslanders with disability with complex needs can access the support and services they need; and
* Investing in further workforce and market development to meet individual needs, contemporary practice and supply of quality services to meet demand.

## Royal Commission into violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of people with disability

QDN calls for candidates to commit to:

* The budget announcement, which allows for effective engagement and additional resources so that people with disability have the support they need to participate in the Royal Commission;
* Ensure Commissioners have no conflict of interest and that there are transparent processes in place to declare conflict of interest; and
* Ensure that the support available to assist individuals is tendered to organisations that are not direct service providers and are free from potential or real conflicts of interest.

## Housing

QDN calls for candidates to commit to:

* Development and implementation of a national housing plan for people with disability, as part of a National Housing Strategy, which aligns with the National Disability Agreement and Strategy;
* Re-funding the NRAS with set targets for people with disability to get assistance through this scheme;
* SDA Review Framework implementation including key recommendations to ensure that SDA is appropriately funded to deliver new housing options for people with disability;
* Enhancing National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation’s (NHFIC) mandate to include borrowing for accessible and affordable housing;
* Mandating accessibility features in all new housing, through the National Construction Code, to a minimum of Livable Housing Australia Gold Level Design.
* Implementing funding options to make all necessary modification of existing social housing to meet Livable Housing Australia Gold Level Design;

* Increasing Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 30% for people with disability; and
* Undertaking a study into the national expansion of existing state home purchase assistance programs to assist people with disability, including shared-equity opportunities with families, to enter and maintain home ownership.

## Transport

QDN calls for candidates to commit to:

* Implementing standards in DSAPT that require accessible public consultation with people with disability and their supporters before the procurement of any public transport;
* Leading actions to uphold Australia’s obligations, enshrined in various United Nations (UN) treaties and protocols to which Australia is a party in regards to the provision of safe, accessible public transport. This is the responsibility of local, state and federal governments and is actioned through legislation, policies, action plans and position statements which set clear targets;
* Development of clearly articulated compliance/regulations in easy to understand language and multiple accessible formats by the Australian Government, aviation authorities and airlines;
* Provision of mandatory disability awareness training for airline employees and requirements for adequate customer data management so there is some awareness of a passenger’s equipment and individual requirements; and
* Urgent resolution of NDIS/transport mainstream issues around essential transport services such as the TSS and community transport, to ensure people with disability receive these essential services in an integrated way that meets their life needs.

## Health

QDN calls for candidates to commit to:

* Funding specific co-designed and peer led programs to increase the health literacy of people with disability. These programs should equip people with the skills, information and confidence to make informed choices, be knowledgeable of their healthcare rights and to successfully navigate the heath system;
* Funding education programs and initiatives in Primary Health Networks and universities, to increase capacity of General Practitioners (GPs) and other allied health professionals to better meet the needs of people with disability;
* Establishing a national inquiry into the health of people with intellectual disability, with particular reference to health services within Commonwealth responsibility. The inquiry would conduct public consultations, review the current evidence for best practice and recommend a framework of action to provide accessible, high quality health care to people with intellectual disability;
* Funding a specific program in Primary Health Networks to enhance the capacity of GPs and other primary health services to respond to the needs of people with intellectual disability and to link them to appropriate healthcare;
* The development, piloting and evaluation of model curriculum enhancements to include core intellectual disability, physical and mental health content, in university medical and nursing schools. People with disability need to be involved in the design, implementation, teaching and evaluation of these curriculum enhancements; and
* Urgent resolution of NDIS/health mainstream issues around essential health services such as community nursing, mental health, wound and catheter care and medical and continence aids subsidies, to ensure people with disability receive these essential services in an integrated way that meets their life needs.

## Employment

QDN calls for candidates to commit to:

* Adoption of disability action plans for all public entities and private workplaces, if currently not in place, including employment ratio targets for people with disability of 10-13% and a commitment to inclusive workplaces;
* Incentives for private workplaces to adopt disability action plans which also include employment ratio targets for people with disability and a commitment to inclusive workplaces;
* Offer skilling opportunities that are well-resourced, inclusive of and focused on people’s skills and abilities and not be punitive in nature; and
* Offer funding for ongoing innovative programs focused on leadership of people with disability.

## National Disability Agreement and National Disability Strategy

QDN calls for candidates to commit to:

* Acceptance and implementation of the recommendations of the [Productivity Commission report *Review of the National Disability Agreement*](https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/disability-agreement#report);
* Commitment to inclusive consultation on the new National Disability Agreement in which people with disability have their voices heard, and are active participants in the planning, design and implementation of the new agreement.

# Let’s Make Our Voices Heard!

You can help raise awareness of disability issues by emailing, calling or meeting with local candidates to discuss the issues that are important to you.

Your voice is powerful - it only takes a handful of local people speaking up about an issue to make politicians take notice.

By contacting your local candidates you can make sure they know disability issues are important to their community.

We are asking all parties to commit to taking action on the important issues outlined in our policy platform.

Some members may have never met with politicians or their local candidates previously so we have put together some tips to make it easier.

# Arranging to meet your local Candidate

Visit their office, write to them or call them to arrange a meeting. If you can organise a group of QDN members, supporters or family to come with you, great!

Remember to ask how much time they will give you for the meeting and who will be there. Once the meeting has been arranged write an email confirming the details, who will be attending with you and what you want to talk about.

**Writing to your local candidate**

Write a short letter or email to your local candidate. A letter template is below if you would like to use it. A short well written letter or email is better than a long one. Politicians get lots of emails so focus on the important message or story you want them to hear. Make sure you give them your name and details too. An important part of your letter or email is to call for action. Ask the candidate for a reply and an interview. Ask for a commitment to explore your issues.

Contact details for state candidates for the main parties are attached

# Here are some tips to help you *get prepared* for meeting your local candidate

**Background Information**

Prepare some background information on the issue if you can. There are talking points further on to help. You don’t have to know everything; the most important thing is letting them know what issues are important to you.

**Talking from the heart – the power of sharing your story**

Politicians want to hear about your lived experience and the lived experiences of people you know. Don’t underestimate how powerful your story is!

**Know what the main things you want to talk about are**

Before you speak to your local politician or candidate, think about two or three stories you want to tell them. Also, write down two or three key messages you want them to hear and remember. Be clear and focussed about why you are meeting with them. Ask them for a commitment.

# Here are some tips to help you *during your meeting* with your local candidate

**A summary of good approach for your meeting**

1. Tell them why you are there.
2. Tell them the issues that are important to you and people with disability.
3. Talk about the solutions and what you can do to help them, like directing them to QDN for more information.
4. Don’t forget to follow up – write a letter or email or phone to say thanks for meeting with you.

**Explain who QDN is**

Something like: QDN is a network of, for, and by people with disability. The Network regularly brings members together to discuss relevant social policy issues that impact upon their lives. QDN has over 1800 members and supporters across the state.

**Be positive and call for action**

Encourage your candidate to take up the issue of addressing QDN’s seven election platform areas and recommendations and to help bring about the change required. Share a story or your lived experience, which relates to one of the seven priority areas (this helps to make the issue real to the candidate). Explain the benefits for the candidate and his/her electorate. Be clear on the issue and its importance.

**Establish yourself as a resource**

Let your candidate know that you have experiences on this particular issue and should they require more information that you are able to provide it to them. Also explain why the issue is important to you and your community.

## Electoral Voting

Important information about voting can be found by visiting the Australian Electoral Commission website by clicking [here](https://www.aec.gov.au/) or calling 13 23 26.

To apply for a postal vote click [here](https://www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/special_category/General_postal_voters.htm).

The Australian Electoral Commission also has people at polling booths that can assist with some tasks involved in voting.

# Useful Statistics for talking about disability

* Queensland’s population is 4.9 million people, or which 17.7% or just less than 1 in every 5 Queenslanders have a disability - approximately 900,000 people.
* An estimated 236,000 Queenslanders of all ages have a profound or severe disability.
* Approximately 91,000 participants are expected to enter the NDIS in Queensland, of these 45,000 are current existing clients of specialist disability services, and 45,000 will be people with disability who have never got funding before and will be brand new to the scheme.

**Sample letter or email about disability issues requesting a meeting with a local candidate**

Dear [*Candidate name*],

I am writing to you as a constituent of [*electorate*] and as person with a disability to highlight key issues important to my friends, family and I when we go to vote on [insert date].

Queensland’s population is 4.9 million people, of which 17.7% or just less than 1 in every 5 Queenslanders have a disability - approximately 900,000 people.

We, along with our families, support workers and friends are a significant group in your electorate and across the state.

In this election the most important topics to my family and I are; **NDIS Implementation and Interface issues, the Royal Commission into violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of people with disability, housing, transport, health, employment and the National Disability Agreement and National Disability Strategy.**

I would like to learn more about your policies on these and other issues affecting people with disability. This information will assist me to make a decision about which candidate to support.

I am also a member of [Queenslanders with Disability Network](http://www.qdn.org.au), a network of, for, and by people with disability. The Network regularly brings members together to discuss relevant policy issues that impact upon our lives.

Queenslanders with Disability Network has identified the key issues for our members and developed them into our Election Platform outlining the networks position on these issues and the action we would like to see on each issue.

I have attached a copy of the Election Platform for your feedback.

**I am seeking an opportunity to meet with you to hear your view on** **these important issues and share my perspective on how they affect local families, carers and our community.**

I believe that if we work together we can improve outcomes for people with disability in [*electorate*].

I look forward to speaking to you or a member of your staff soon to organise a convenient time to meet.

Yours sincerely

*[Your full name]*

*[Your Address]*.