

## Queensland Disability Alliance

### **Scheme access**

*How will people who need additional help accessing the NDIS be supported, including people with diverse disabilities who are more marginalised due to their life/social situation and/or cultural background, people and have limited literacy skills and people needing formal assessments via allied health professionals with limited ability to pay for these?*

Anyone who needs to access the NDIS should be able to get it.

The Greens will:

- Lift the staffing cap, meaning enough staff will be employed to assist applicants with NDIS processes;
- Ensure that IT programs and processes are accessible to everyone no matter what their background is or situation may require, including languages and literacy skills
  - A refreshed and fit-for-purpose IT system will also allow participants to have more than one disability listed as a priority on their file, so that those with diverse disabilities or complex situations will be able to be better assisted

### **NDIS Workforce**

*We have a critical NDIS workforce shortage, including the need for a quality workforce, especially support workers, across the NDIA, LAC, allied health, disability and mental health services support workers – what is your strategy to address this?*

The Greens are committed to creating a properly funded, staffed and resourced NDIS that is transparent, consultative and accountable. The Greens will remove the staffing cap and ensure that staff receive high-quality, ongoing training and support.

### **People over the age of 65 to be able to access the NDIS**

*What actions would your party take regarding people over 65 with disability who have significant functional impairment, however, are currently not eligible to access the NDIS because of their age. What would your party do to change this?*

The Greens will push to remove the age limit that prevents people over 65 from being accepted in the NDIS so that the NDIS is accessible to people of all ages.

### **NDIS Plans**

*Feedback is that NDIS plans are being reduced both in funding and support levels, that professional reports do not appear to be considered in plan review decisions re NDIS funding and that some NDIA Planners undertaking planning meetings lack appropriate experience. How will you improve the experience and outcomes for NDIS participants?*

The Office of Senator Steele-John has worked very closely with the community to provide support to those being taken by the NDIS to the AAT. Senator Steele-John has also questioned both the AAT and NDIA on the amount of cases that are currently being heard through the Senate Estimates process.

The Greens will fully fund and staff the NDIS so that participants are ensured the funding and support levels that they require.

The Greens will also ensure the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is properly resourced to undertake its compliance and investigative capacity through an immediate investment of \$300 million.

### **Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT)**

*People with disability and their families are experiencing a range of challenges in taking appeals to the AAT – how will you ensure that NDIS participants have access to appropriate levels of support?*

We recognise that disabled people are overrepresented in the criminal legal system in Australia, and this is even more so for disabled First Nations peoples. We must urgently address this crisis through community-led solutions, and undo the racism and ableism that have led us here.

The Greens will:

- Work with communities to co-design justice reinvestment and diversionary programs to reduce the interaction disabled people have with the criminal legal system;
- Ensure that disabled people in the criminal legal system, particularly in carceral settings, are able to access disability supports and reasonable adjustments and modifications, including the NDIS. This includes the support in the lead up to any court proceedings and during the court proceedings themselves. This will have the effect of ensuring that disabled people are provided all the necessary supports to be able to meaningfully participate throughout the entire process of their legal proceedings;
- Ensure that disabled people interacting with the legal system are provided with appropriate support, including advocacy and legal support
- Ensure that all Australian jurisdictions that allow people to be imprisoned after a finding of unfitness to plead or to stand trial, or by verdict of not guilty due to impairment, impose effective limits on the total period of imprisonment that a person can be subject to.

### **General NDIS Questions**

*How will your party implement recommendations from previous reviews to improve overall scheme effectiveness, including cost-effectiveness and individual outcomes for participants?*

The NDIS has the potential to transform the lives of disabled people, their families and carers. But to transform lives, the scheme needs to work, deliver on its promises, and meet the needs of people.

The Greens are committed to creating a properly funded, staffed and resourced NDIS that is transparent, consultative and accountable.

The Greens will:

- Remove the staffing cap and ensure that staff receive high-quality, ongoing training and support;
- Ensure the IT systems and interfaces for participants and service providers are fit for purpose and fully accessible;
- Ensure the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is properly resourced to undertake its compliance and investigative capacity through an immediate investment of \$300 million;
- Push to remove the age limit that prevents people over 65 from being accepted in the NDIS;
- Boost NDIS funding and reinvest into the NDIS the \$160 million the Morrison Government committed to corporations as part of their failed attempt to roll out Independent Assessments.

*What commitments will your party make to continue to co-design and consult with people with disability, families, and the broader disability sector to deliver integration across disability and mainstream services?*

The Greens are committed to ensuring that disabled people are leading and at the centre of decision-making, policy and planning through a \$30 million increase in Commonwealth funding for disability advocacy organisations over four years.

Disabled people should also be leading the NDIS as members of the board, management, and minister. The Greens are committed to working in consultation with disabled people to push for leadership that represents the community.

### **Information, linkages and capacity building and peer support**

*Will your party commit to continued funding for Information, Linkages and Capacity Building initiatives, for example, peer support models and leadership approaches? This is an essential component of the NDIS which focuses upon building individual and broad community services' capacity, towards better inclusion of people with disability.*

By increasing funding and reinvesting the \$160 million the Morrison Government committed to corporations as part of their failed attempt to roll out Independent Assessments, we can reshape the NDIS and ensure it continues to include peer support models and leadership approaches.

**For people with disability not eligible for the NDIS who are experiencing gaps in services and supports**

*How will you ensure support to people with disability who are not eligible to access the NDIS including older persons and people with complex health conditions and significant functional impairments?*

The Greens will provide older people with the level of care they need. We will increase hours of care, improve the pay and conditions of staff, clear the waiting lists and keep them clear.

Primarily, we will be pushing the next government to remove the aged cap on access to the NDIS.

We are also improving aged care.

The Greens will:

- Provide \$6 billion per year to:
  - Increase hours of care to 4 hours 18 minutes per resident per day
  - Introduce staff-to-resident ratios to ensure the best quality care
  - Increase wages for aged care workers by 25% and improve conditions and training
  - Phase out for-profit providers
  - Guarantee a human rights based approach to aged care and end physical and chemical restraints
- Invest \$260 million to keep the home care package waiting list clear

You can read more about our policy for aged care here: [6.2 Aged care for all \(greens.org.au\)](https://greens.org.au/policy/aged-care)

The Australian Greens have also proposed reforms to the Disability Support Pension. This includes a significant increase to the payment which would facilitate greater financial independence and reduce the impact of a partner's earnings on your income. Under our plan, disabled person would receive \$95 per day (\$88 per day, plus an additional illness and disability supplement), this is more than the current rate of \$70 per day.

You can read more about our policy for a guaranteed liveable income that lifts payments above the poverty line here: <https://greens.org.au/platform/equality#income-support>

### **Disaster and emergency – people with disability**

*People with disability experience a range of additional barriers before, during and after a disaster. How will your party ensure people with disability are leading in disaster planning – including their own plans; disability and community services can better support people to get continued supports, and emergency and disaster services build their capacity and*

*confidence to better respond to people with diverse disabilities, so we don't leave any Australian behind before, during and after?*

To ensure that people with disability are leading in disaster planning and can feel safe during crises The Greens will:

- invest \$15 million over the forward estimates to ensure our emergency responders and disaster relief services receive disability awareness training;
- Implement all recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Public Report on the Experiences of People with Disability During the Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic;
- Establish an Office of Disability Strategy within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, responsible for coordinating and monitoring progress of the National Disability Strategy.

### **Digital Divide**

*How will you make sure people with disability can get digital devices and increase people's digital literacy so they can use the devices to get essential services – like doctors' appointments, allied health services, groceries, medications, etc.*

The Greens are committed to an inclusive, accessible, digital society for all of us. We will:

- Restore funding and invest \$30 million to increase the availability of AUSLAN interpreters, relay and translation services, and expand the regulatory requirement for audio description and captioning services to commercial TV;
- Provide \$1.49 million over two years, followed by ongoing annual funding of \$2 million indexed by the Consumer Price Index, to establish a National Disability Telecommunications Service, a national resource for communications product and services information, training and support;
- Invest an initial \$5 million to re-establish a safe, dedicated online platform for the promotion of discussion, debate, and cultural development within the disability community (similar to the ABC's defunded Ramp Up).

### **Inclusive Education**

*How will you move away from segregated education and deliver on inclusive education?*

The Greens will transition to a fully inclusive education system by:

- Investing an initial \$10 million over four years to co-design a National Inclusive Education Transition Plan with disabled people, families, disability representative organisations, teachers and their unions, and education experts;
- Building inclusive education into tertiary qualifications and giving all pre-service and in-service teachers and principals the opportunity to train, retrain and regularly upskill in inclusive education practices by investing \$400 million over four years.

## **Employment**

*How will you ensure that the National Disability Strategy can achieve its goals to improve employment rates of people with disability, and that the services can deliver outcomes?*

The Greens will work with the disability community to create a National Jobs Plan that:

- Sets a 20 per cent quota for full employment representation of disabled employees in the Australian Public Service by 2030
- Sets milestone targets, performance indicators and timeframes for increasing the workforce participation and retention for disabled people across all sectors
- Ends segregated employment, including the closure of Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE), and makes transitional arrangements for workers.

## **Health**

*How can we improve access to health, disability, and mental health services particularly in rural and remote areas of our state?*

We have heard throughout the course of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability that there remain significant and fatal barriers to accessible healthcare.

The Greens will:

- Fully fund and implement the National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability, including the funding of a national centre of excellence, in the first year of government
- Invest \$56 million over four years to fully roll out the Primary Health Enhancement Program across the 31 Primary Healthcare Networks
- Invest an initial \$10 million over four years working with disabled people, disability representative organisations and educational institutions to develop model curricula for health professionals that focus on disability awareness in medical practice.

*What will you do to improve access to dental services for people with disability?*

The Greens will invest \$77.6 billion over the decade to provide free dental care to everyone who is eligible for Medicare, ensuring everyone can visit the dentist when they need to.

We will also ensure that everyone with access to Medicare is eligible for the clinically relevant dental service they require, including general dental, orthodontics and restorative services. We will train the next generation of dentists through fee-free university courses to enable the expansion of dental care for all.

*How will you make mental health care more affordable and more accessible? What will be your strategic approach?*

The Greens will ensure everyone gets the mental health care they want and need. We will change the rebate so psychology and psychiatry providers are able to access the Medicare rebate.

The Greens will:

- Invest \$4.8 billion over the decade to ensure mental healthcare is fully covered under Medicare
- Make mental health care free by providing unlimited sessions with a psychologist or psychiatrist with no out of pocket fees.
- Invest \$2.6 billion over the decade to implement a national rollout of the Individual Placement and Support program
- Increase the number of peer workers by 1,000 workers
- Address the social determinants of health like economic and social security

### **Disability Advocacy**

*People with disability need access to adequate, independent advocacy across not only the NDIS and AAT processes but also mainstream services. How will you ensure increased individual and systemic advocacy support to Australians with disability?*

With a \$30 million increase in Commonwealth funding for disability advocacy organisations over four years The Greens will create easier access to independent advocacy organisations for people with disabilities.

In addition, for disabled folks in the legal system, The Greens will:

- Ensure that disabled people in the criminal legal system, particularly in carceral settings, are able to access disability supports and reasonable adjustments and modifications, including the NDIS.
  - This includes the support in the lead up to any court proceedings and during the court proceedings themselves.
  - This will have the effect of ensuring that disabled people are provided all the necessary supports to be able to meaningfully participate throughout the entire process of their legal proceedings;
- Ensure that disabled people interacting with the legal system are provided with appropriate support, including advocacy and legal support;

### **Accessible, Affordable Housing**

*How will you address accessible, affordable housing for people with disability across a broad range of services including homelessness, domestic and family violence, NDIS housing options?*

The Greens will:

- Ensure the implementation of the Liveable Housing Australia (LHA) Silver standard now codified in the National Construction Code across all jurisdictions
- Build one million fully accessible public and community homes under the Federal Housing Trust
- Invest in accessible housing solutions to ensure availability of high quality Specialist Disability Accommodation and transitional housing options to ensure disabled people aren't forced into residential aged care

### **Disability Support Pension**

*How will you improve the rate of payment in relation to the Disability Support Pension and provisions around working arrangements that could assist with current workforce shortage issues?*

The Australian Greens have also proposed reforms to the Disability Support Pension. This includes a significant increase to the payment which would facilitate greater financial independence and reduce the impact of a partner's earnings on your income. Under our plan, disabled person would receive \$95 per day (\$88 per day, plus an additional illness and disability supplement), this is more than the current rate of \$70 per day.

You can read more about our policy for a guaranteed liveable income that lifts payments above the poverty line here: <https://greens.org.au/platform/equality#income-support>

### **Young people in care**

*For young people with disabilities who have been in foster care and child safety systems, along with adults with disability who have their children taken into these systems, how will you ensure their needs for support in these systems are addressed?*

In 2014, Greens Senator Rachel Siewert, a long-time campaigner for children and young people in care, initiated and chaired a national inquiry into out-of-home care. The Report of the Senate Community Affairs References Committee on the Inquiry into Children in Out of Home Care in Australia was handed down in August last year and made 39 recommendations to improve the Out of Home Care system in Australia.

Included in these was the recommendation that all states and territories raise the age to which young people continue to receive ongoing post-care support to 21.

We support all the recommendations of this report by Senator Siewert, which can be viewed here: [LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](#)

### **National Autism Report**

*The Senate Committee on Autism has just released its final report. How will your party implement the main recommendations of the report, including commitment to a National Autism Strategy (NAS)?*

Senator Steele-John was an active committee member on the Senate Select Committee on Autism. The Australian Greens dissenting report highlights our response to the final report, with the following recommendations:

That the Australian Government takes urgent steps to ensure that all policies relating to autistic people:

- place the perspective of autistic people at the centre;
- are evidence informed and human rights-based;
- are informed by the social and affirmative model of disability; and
- are aligned with Australia's commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

That the National Autism Strategy:

- closely align with the National Disability Strategy to recognise the interaction between autism and other disabilities and mental illnesses;
- focus on the autistic community and that a separate strategy is considered which focuses on the families and carers to recognise the individual access needs and support requirements of these two groups; and
- is created through a process of co-design with autistic people and those they choose as support people, the Disability Royal Commission and stakeholder groups, with the recognition that its design may or may not align with the recommendations of this report.

That the Australian Government transition to a fully inclusive education system by 2030, through a National Inclusive Education Transition Plan with disabled people, families, disability representative organisations, education experts, teachers, and their unions.

All further research, education and training relating to autistic people should be co-designed and co-delivered by autistic people.

That an easy-read version of the committee's report and this dissenting report be distributed so that it is widely accessible to the autistic community.

You can read the Australian Greens dissenting report here: [Australian Greens Senators' dissenting report – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](#)

**Public Trustee Report 4 Corners -National Standard and Approach to Supported Decision Making:**

*Will your party support a national supported decision-making scheme to help people with disability make their own choices and experience more choice and control in their own lives?*

For too long, disabled people have been shut out of decision-making and policy creation affecting the community. This has perpetuated discrimination, violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and has seen devastating consequences.

The Greens will always ensure that the disability community are not only included in but empowered to lead in policy, planning, and implementation.

**Disability Royal Commission:**

*What will your party do to address key issues raised, and recommendations arising out of the Disability Royal Commission?*

Senator Steele-John was instrumental in the establishment of the Disability Royal Commission. We have already committed to the recommendations of the Royal Commission's findings into the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people, and are committed to implementing all recommendations of the Royal Commission given they meet the needs and are supported by the disability community. We also successfully legislated changes to the Royal Commission's Act to strengthen protections for people seeking to give confidential evidence to the Disability Royal Commission.