

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?

Any assessments via allied health professionals should be bulk billed. We would like to see more services providing assistance at no cost to help people needing additional help to apply for and access the NDIS. This should be part of the service.

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?

We will be boosting health services and the above-mentioned services with a budget of \$40 billion going directly to the services. We will cut out the middleman (State Government) so that the full amount reaches the services directly.

The United Australia Party is committed to no-cost higher education and encouragement for people to study within these areas of healthcare so that we can have top quality workers meeting the needs of people with disabilities, mental health etc.

We would end all mandates and reinstate qualified workers back into the jobs that they are passionate about. They aren't a risk to anyone and with proper management and processes in place, we can see them once again back working with clients.

Eligibility

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?

Disability doesn't suddenly stop when you reach 65. It also can happen when you are over 65. Therefore, any age limit that has been placed should be removed. I would work to ensure that this is achieved, and that bureaucratic red tape is removed. Everyone with a disability deserves to be able to access NDIS.

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 NDIS funding and support levels should not be reduced. These should be adjusted each year in line with inflation so that the cost/value of services is not diminished. Review decisions should be made to consider all documentation available to make an informed and well-rounded decision. Any planners undertaking planning meetings need to be appropriately trained as well as all other staff so that in the event of absence due to illness, holidays etc there would be adequately trained staff able to conduct planning meetings at all times.

From a health care perspective, it needs to be patient centric and individualised due to the varying needs of each individual. We cannot simply choose a one size fits all approach and we certainly cannot reduce any of the services, funding or support for people with disabilities. Consultation and employment opportunities for people with disabilities to work within this area should be considered.

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?

Everyone deserves to be able to appeal decisions made. A fair and just process should be made accessible and understandable to all without financial, mental or physical impact. The United Australia Party will enact a Bill of Rights so that our rights are strengthened, supported and upheld.

I believe we need to look at the system to understand the challenges faced when taking appeals to the AAT. Once we are aware of what needs to be changed then we can certainly adopt any or all areas that need to be modified to assist people with disabilities in taking an appeal to the Tribunal. Whether that be increased legal support or funding, this would need to be looked at to see where the greatest problems are within this process.

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?

Tenders should be considered from all who submit them to help bring down the costs whether it be through a local tradesperson installing handrails or a ramp in the modification of someone's home. We shouldn't allow favouritism of any one company over another, but we should select based on quality and cost-effectiveness.

A review process is an opportunity to implement what was recommended. Failing to implement recommendations is a failure on all people with a disability. Therefore, I would like to see all recommendations from previous reviews made compulsory so that we can improve the overall effectiveness of the scheme and ensure that we are not creating gaps in the system. Other industries must do this, so why not NDIS too?

- 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?

All services across the disability sector need to be interconnected. We need a system that functions like a tree. Each branch from the main tree trunk is a vital component and all need to be consulted in how the system can move forward with better service delivery so that it can grow and provide for

people with disabilities in the long term. I am committed to working with all involved including families on how we can make it work better and provide the best quality services possible.

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.

Absolutely committed to this and would welcome an open discussion with all involved in these areas to work out the best way forward to a more inclusive society for people with disability. Everyone can achieve great things if given the opportunity.

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?

If you have a disability, then there is absolutely no reason why they should be excluded from NDIS. If we remove the age cap a lot more can become eligible. Bureaucratic hurdles and red tape often is the reason why so many are left without access to these services. I am committed to removing the blockers which are prohibiting access to the NDIS for people with disabilities so that everyone can access the support, care and funding they need to live their lives with dignity and respect.

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?

All people, regardless of disability should have an emergency plan. This should include contact numbers of services within their community who can assist them to evacuate, in clean-up efforts, and to rebuild their lives. Community emergency services should receive in-depth training in patient handling and transporting of people with disabilities. For complex needs, emergency workers could work in conjunction with ambulance officers to help relocate and sustain life. We are a country that used to be based around helping your neighbour or your community. We need to ensure that we look after everyone in our community so that no one is left behind or lost in a disaster.

I would like to see free community classes for anyone in the community wanting to receive training on how to assist people with disabilities in a disaster.

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.

We have so much technology in our lives that I am certain that it could be possible to create an app that integrates all these services into one. For example, a portal for people with disabilities to access different services. The services could be programmed into the device so that at the touch of the screen it would link them to the service that is required. Doctor, Allied health, Online grocery shopping, pharmacies, legal etc. This could be utilised across both Apple and Android devices. The portal could be adapted to recognise voice commands or used manually. This would be a game changing service.

Inclusive Education

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

We need more specialised staffing within schools, on site school nurses who can assist in any medical emergency should one arise. Having people with disabilities attend schools, Tafe and University is the first step in creating more compassion and understanding within the community. One of my best friends from school received an integrated education back in the 80's and 90's and today he is smashing out his goals and living his life to the fullest. I'm proud of him and he inspires me still to this very day. Imagine if it had of been an inclusive education? He may well have succeeded in many more ways.

A review of disability standards for education in line with CPRD is greatly needed. Educational improvement targets for people with disability to ensure that a quality standard of education is being received. An accreditation framework to ensure that inclusive education is being consistent, meeting the standards and looking at areas where it can continue to improve would be of benefit too.

We will need to ensure that there is an independent body that is able to deal with complaints and investigations into any wrong doings should they occur.

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?

Incentives for employers to employ staff with disabilities needs to be increased and the condition on receiving those incentives is that the employee should be paid in line with other workers so that they are not financially disadvantaged or taken advantage of, that they are not discriminated against for things outside their control and working conditions are safe and accessible. This could be communicated via a national marketing campaign.

Health

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

The United Australia Party is committed to decentralising the capital cities and encouraging services, businesses and people to move to rural and remote areas. This will encourage investment in our rural and remote communities and will see a 20% regional tax concession for those willing to do this. If you live 200km or more from a capital city, then this will be available for you. This is a great way to boost a local community and encourage the services to invest in rural and remote regions.

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

As far as I'm aware, in the whole of Brisbane we have two mobile dentistry businesses. They provide dental services to nursing homes, palliative care patients, hospitals, and people with disabilities. If we could expand these services across the country and utilise the excess number of dentists to work within this service, we could improve the access to dental services.

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

Mental Health Care Plans should not be restricted to a certain number of visits. They should be left open and assessed by the GP and health care professionals as to what ongoing needs there may be for patients. Having a greater number of people employed in this sector would also be beneficial so that we can address the tremendous wait times to see a mental health care professional. If we can reduce wait times and make the services funded by Medicare this would be a great step forward.

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?

Advocacy support services is an area that needs addressing. We have a couple of rogue advocacy services out there who have been robbing people with disabilities blind. This needs to stop. We need to ensure that the services who jump on board to provide disability advocacy are reputable and are in it for the right reasons. I would like to ensure that every person with a disability has access to advocacy support when they need it, and this would be an area of investment for the community I would address if elected.

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?

More needs to be done without question. Whether that be by providing services to a person's current abode to alter and change it to meet their needs or by building alternative housing. I believe

that specialised housing could be built that is designed with people with disabilities in mind. If we can build aged care and retirement villas by the hundreds, why can't we create similar homes for people with disabilities in mind. We can also repurpose social housing and renovate them so that they are suitable for people with disabilities. The housing projects would be similar to social housing in the way that rent would be paid for the property and maintained by an external body.

Domestic violence shelters should be expanded to support people with disabilities in a more effective way.

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?

As stated in one of the above questions, I would increase incentives for employers to hire people with disabilities. This would see more people able to contribute to the workforce in a meaningful way and with fair pay. Increasing the threshold around working arrangements would create better incentives to fill workforce shortages. For those who are unable to work, we need to increase the rate of DSP in line with inflation to counteract the cost-of-living pressures. The United Australia Party will be reducing the cost-of-living pressures on all Australians by paying down the \$1.4 trillion-dollar national debt by applying a 15% export licence on iron ore. This means that we won't need to tax anyone to pay off this debt. Paying off the debt also means that we won't be paying interest on it and that will free up more money in the economy to go to essential services and supports. This would include the disability support pension. Currently those over 65 are put onto an Age Pension which we are increasing by \$180 a fortnight per person. If we can remove the cap on the NDIS, we could put the extra funding to people on a Disability Support Pension that they would have otherwise received under an Age Pension.

COVID-19

- How will your party work to ensure that the experiences of people with disability during the COVID 19 pandemic are not repeated: including your approach to workforce vaccinations and access to testing, personal protective equipment by both people with disability and their workforce?

As the covid-19 injections are still under a trial (granted provisional approvals only by the TGA) I would not be forcing anyone to participate in taking them. If you choose to do so, then it is your choice. We need a more sensible approach to Covid-19 as we now know a lot more about it. Better hygiene, social distancing, staying at home if you are sick have all played a part in minimising the spread of the virus. This same protocol should be used for influenza viruses too. A lot of people in the past would have "soldiered on" and went to work. Now I believe we all need to be mindful of our own health so that we limit the impact on others. With RAT and PCR tests being inconsistently reliable, I would recommend that the testing be shifted to a serology blood test to check for antibodies. Personal protective equipment was difficult to acquire during the pandemic by all health care sectors and as such I believe that we need to look at manufacturing a lot more of our supplies in Australia to avoid the disruption to our supplies.

Young people in care

- For young people with disability 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?

The foster care and child safety systems need to be reformed. There have been many failures of children in care, let alone young people with disabilities. We need better education for the families providing care, support and a home for people with disabilities and we also need to ensure that the services are adequately monitoring, addressing and following up any issues. This is a complex system, with complex needs and a lot more needs to be done. A consultative process with families would be beneficial to achieve better outcomes.

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)?

With 1 in every 30 children on the autism spectrum, this is vital to help improve the outcomes for people with Autism so that they can lead an independent life and enter the workforce successfully. We need to ensure we fill the gaps in the system so that no one falls through them. Better support services are needed for both the family and person with Autism.

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?

Everyone deserves the right to make their own choices for their life. This would be a fantastic step forward for the fundamental human rights of people with disability.

Disability Royal Commission:

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

We will work to address and implement all recommendations so that we can provide a better service, support and care for all people with disabilities.