

# ONLINE ELECTION FORUM QUEENSLAND EVENT

DISABILITY ONLINE FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

OCTOBER 2024



## About the Queensland Disability Alliance

The Queensland Disability Alliance is a collection of thirty-four (34) disability organisations including:

- Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia (ADA)
- AMPARO Advocacy
- Arafmi
- Autism Queensland
- Better Hearing Australia
- Capricorn Citizen Advocacy
- Carers Queensland
- CheckUP
- Community Living Association (CLA)
- Community Resource Unit (CRU)
- Deaf Connect
- Down Syndrome Queensland
- Endeavour Foundation
- Guide Dogs Queensland
- Mackay Advocacy Inc.
- Micah Projects Inc.
- Mob4Mob
- Multicap
- Multicultural Australia
- National Disability Services Queensland (NDS)
- Outback Independent Living
- Parent to Parent Assoc. Qld (P2P)
- People with Disability Australia (PWDA)
- Rights in Action
- TASC National Ltd
- Spinal Life Australia
- Speaking Up for You (SUFY)
- Synapse
- Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN)
- Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC)
- Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (QAI)
- Queensland Alliance for Mental Health (QAMH)
- Queensland Collective for Inclusive Education (QCIE)
- Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network (QIDAN).

Collectively, our organisations represent the breadth of the Queensland disability, advocacy, health, mental health, education and community services sectors. We represent people with disability, their families and carers and we share a common goal: building a more inclusive Queensland where everyone thrives.

# Make Disability Count in Queensland - inclusion, rights and access

As a disability alliance we want to make sure disability is front and centre at this 2024 state election. Collectively we are committed to the rights, social and economic participation of people with disability and their families and carers. We stand by the crucial role that the disability, community services, and mental health sectors play in driving Queensland's economic growth.

Our vision for a more inclusive Queensland demands a robust disability ecosystem, one that meets the needs of all Queenslanders with disability, including essential mainstream services like education, health, housing, justice, child safety, employment, transport, and disaster management.

We have identified six priority areas where action is needed, and we are calling on all political parties to commit to these key areas, ensuring that our vision for an inclusive Queensland becomes a reality.

The Disability Alliance asks the next Queensland Government to commit to six key priority areas which are below and more details relating to the priorities can be found in documents below:

1. Foundational Support Service System
2. Disability Reforms - Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review
3. Independent individual and systemic advocacy
4. Disability leadership and innovation
5. Mainstream services
6. Disability workforce and sector capacity

Click [here](#) to read the Queensland Disability Alliance statement. Click [here](#) to read the accessible version of the Queensland Disability Alliance statement.

## Introduction

On Monday 23 September, the Queensland Disability Alliance, led by QDN, hosted an online state election disability forum. Over 350 people registered for the forum, including people with disability, families, providers, advocacy organisations, and other members of the broader disability community. The forum brought together the disability sector to hear from three representatives of the Queensland Greens, Australian Labor Party, and the Liberal National Party, who shared their positions across key topics regarding disability, inclusion, and accessibility in Queensland.

The representatives were:

- Amy MacMahon MP (Queensland Greens)
- Minister Charis Mullen MP (Australian Labor Party)
- Shadow Minister John-Paul Langbroek MP (Liberal National Party).

The forum was opened by QDN Chairperson Sharon Boyce, QDN CEO Michelle Moss, Uncle Willie Prince, and Uncle Paul Calcott and was attended by over 200 people in total. This report shares what we heard from candidates and their responses to attendee questions at the forum.

## Summary of points made by candidates

Each candidate gave a small presentation about disability, inclusion, and accessibility in Queensland during the forum, which has been summarised below.

### Amy McMahon MP (Queensland Greens)

Amy MacMahon MP is the Greens MP for South Brisbane and covers the state portfolios for Treasury, Housing, Health, Education, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. During the forum, Amy MacMahon MP was introduced by Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (QAI) CEO Matilda Alexander.

#### Background and introduction

- I do not have personal lived experience of disability, but I do have insight into the support and services available to Queenslanders with disability from my own experience and advocacy work.
- The Greens are committed to establishing a robust Foundational Support Service System, implementing Disability Royal Commission recommendations, properly funding individual and systemic advocacy, fostering disability leadership and innovation, fully funded mainstream services available to everyone, and growing the disability workforce and sector.

#### Disability reforms

- The recent changes to the NDIS changes broadly limit access to resources to a defined list of services that participants can spend their funding on.
- Changes to the NDIS are likely to mean that more people will fall outside of the scheme and will have to rely on other services, that in some cases, do not yet exist.
- These reforms will limit the choice and discretion that was meant to be a key part of the NDIS.
- We remain deeply concerned that people will lose access to services and supports before these new Foundational Supports are established, trialled or tested and that these cuts will roll out without adequate financial supports in place.
- There is a broad expectation that many people will be able to tap into mainstream services to get the support that they need, but we know that many of these mainstream services are already underfunded and struggling.

#### Cost-of-living

- I want to make sure that all Queenslanders with disability have access to the things they need to lead a good life.
- Queensland is one of the wealthiest states in one of the wealthiest countries in the world and there is no reason why everyone cannot get access to support, services and care that they need and deserve.
- While many people are struggling with the housing and cost-of-living crisis, the wealthiest in our communities are not struggling. We know that if we were to tax big corporations more and increase royalties on mining companies, we would have billions more dollars

that we could be investing in our healthcare system, education system, and housing system.

## Education

- Our state school system caters for the majority of students with disability, but it is systemically underfunded about 1.7 billion dollars below the expected minimum amount of funding for state schools.
- Schools have less teachers, less resources and less capacity to provide support for students.
- Students with disability are more likely to have school disciplinary and absences and we are worried that more kids will not get access to the support that they need.
- The Greens have been advocating to make sure that state schools are funded to that minimum level and to make sure that there is additional funding that covers the out-of-pocket expenses including textbooks, uniforms, and excursions.
- We will make sure that everyone get access to the education system that they need.

## Housing

- People with disability are struggling in insecure housing, struggling to afford rent increases, are more likely to be renting and are struggling to find affordable and suitable places to live.
- The Greens have been advocating for a limit on rent increases and advocating for more investment in accessible public housing.

## Healthcare

- I want to make sure that everyone gets access to the healthcare system they need.
- The Greens have been advocating for more investment in primary healthcare and have proposed rolling out a series of 200 public health clinics across Queensland that would be staffed with free GPs, allied health workers and psychologists.
- We are proposing that every Queenslanders would get access to at least 20 free subsidised mental health sessions.

## Minister Charis Mullen MP (Australian Labor Party)

Minister Mullen is the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the State Member for Jordan. During the forum, Minister Mullen was introduced by National Disability Services (NDS) Queensland State Manager Jason McKey.

## Background and introduction

- Our government will continue to be guided by the voices, experiences, and wisdom of people with disability.
- I know many of you are already more than fatigued by the reform agenda, and I do appreciate this, but I need you to hang in there because we will need you to help us make sure we are meeting your vision of an inclusive Queensland.

- The journey towards an inclusive Queensland is ongoing, but it is also at risk.
- The Miles Labor Government believes in and shares your vision for an inclusive Queensland, and I believe our record proves we are willing to listen and work with you to make that vision a reality.

### NDIS reforms

- Our government accepted, or accepted in principle, 103 of the 130 recommendations directed to Queensland in our response to the Disability Royal Commission Final Report.
- We have also confirmed a further 23 recommendations for further consideration.
- I am releasing our *Stakeholder Engagement and Co-Design Strategy* which is about bringing together both the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review recommendations.
- Our government is providing four million dollars for the sector to lead implementation of the Strategy to ensure the voices of people with disability and views of the sector will be central to our state's reform work.
- We have also committed more than 160 million dollars for improved disability services and supports.
- Ongoing investment in the NDIS also remains a key priority; this financial year Queensland will contribute 2.5 billion dollars into the scheme for more than 140,000 Queenslanders.
- Our investment in the NDIS has led to growth in the provider market; 65,000 unregistered providers are supporting Queensland participants and there are 224,000 Queenslanders with clearances to work in NDIS-related work.
- Some providers are finding it difficult to continue operating in the environment and we will continue to elevate issues for providers with our federal counterparts at every opportunity.
- We are deeply engaged with the federal government on Foundational Supports and our approach to planning Foundational Support services will be guided by engagement and co-design with the Queensland disability community.
- We were the first state or territory to make a financial commitment with more than 160 million in disability supports.

### Advocacy

- Our initial investment includes five million dollars to expand individual and systemic disability to uphold the rights and needs of people with disability, which is on top of the one million dollars per annum ongoing to continue the Queensland Disability Advocacy program.
- This is initial funding as we head into our discussions on Foundational Supports.
- We have committed 10 million dollars for the Queensland Community Support Scheme (QCSS).

### Healthcare

- We are investing 6.5 million dollars for additional medical aids and equipment programs.

- We have allocated 7.5 million dollars for disability supports for children with Autism while Foundational Supports are being designed.

### **Mainstream reforms**

- We are committed to ensuring health, education, housing, justice and transport are contemporary, accessible and joined up.
- Our government and ministers have commenced a wide range of mainstream reforms.
- Our framework focuses on accountability for delivery of reforms and mainstream service improvements. We will monitor our efforts and adjust as we need to.

### **Employment**

- Our framework steps up our commitment to increasing disability leadership and representation of people with disability.
- We are using the *Diversity and Inclusion on Boards Toolkit* to increase the number of people with disability sitting on Queensland Government boards.
- We are working with First Nations peoples to develop options for a shared decision-making mechanism.
- We are delivering on our *Inclusion and Diversity Strategy*, which specifically focuses on ensuring public sector workplaces are inclusive of people with disability.
- Our government is committed to ensuring that Queenslanders with disability have the support and skills they need for employment.
- We will continue to support key skills and employment programs including free TAFE which has benefited over 10,000 Queenslanders with disability since 2023, our Skilling Queenslanders for Work program which has supported more than 12,000 people with disability since 2015, and our Back to Work program has supported 3,000 people with disability.

### **Shadow Minister John-Paul Langbroek MP (Liberal National Party)**

John-Paul Langbroek MP is the Shadow Minister for Seniors, Communities and Disability Services and for Multiculturalism and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and the member for Surfers Paradise. During the forum, John-Paul Langbroek MP was introduced by Queensland Alliance for Mental Health (QAMH) CEO Jennifer Black.

### **Background and introduction**

- I have family connections with people with neurological disorders including Motor Neurone Disease and Multiple Sclerosis.
- Many of the topics that we are discussing today are things that I have heard from visiting disability groups.
- The basics that we focus on are housing, financial security and healthcare and these must be accessible to every single Queenslanders.
- Having a job, having access to health services and being able to get around in our communities and be part of communities is important for everyone.

## Employment

- Game Changers highlighted estimates and issues about employment in the public service of people with a disability. There is an 8% target, but so far there is only 2.2% of people with disability who are employed which is much lower than it should be.
- The employment rates for people with disabilities have not increased very much over the last few decades.
- We want to work to get more people into jobs and believe it must be the public sector that leads the way for the private sector.

## Regional issues

- Regional services and the shortage of services really affects people in my party. Many of these things I have prosecuted in estimates.
- I do understand the challenges that affect us all, that they are tough on everyone, and for Queenslanders living with disability, they can be even more difficult to navigate.
- We know it is important that we work together with people with disability and families and the sector to address this.

## Disability reform

- I am concerned about the delay in detail around Foundational Supports, particularly as hospitals and community services are about to be overwhelmed.
- Service providers hold concerns about relinquishments because of the funding structures.
- We know that Queenslanders with disability face additional barriers, and we are committed to working side-by-side with Queenslanders with disability.
- We know the NDIS needs to be sustainable and we will work with people with disability.
- There has been no discussion yet about General Foundational Supports which connects with the Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grants.
- There are people who are missing out on funding, and they have lost staff and infrastructure.
- This uncertainty of ILC funding needs to be addressed by the sector with the support of the federal government.
- I reassure everyone about our genuine willingness to work together to make sure that we engage with all the appropriate stakeholders.

## Housing

- We know that the issue of housing is a broad one; social housing, community housing, private rentals and the housing market.
- We want to look at all those areas and work to make sure that Queenslanders with disability have a place to live and a place to call home.

## Co-design with people with disability

- I have learnt from meeting with QDN and other groups that the best solutions come from those who are directly impacted.



- We commit to involving people with disability in the co-design of policies and building solutions together.
- We know that co-design is important and that people with disability need to have a say in decisions that impact their lives.
- We are committed to working with you to create a better Queensland for all.

## Questions

The questions and answers were facilitated by Geoff Rowe, CEO of Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia. Due to time constraints, only some questions were put to candidates during the forum. Questions are split into the following themes:

- Health
- Housing
- Employment
- Transport
- Education
- Disability reforms
- Disaster and emergency planning
- Digital inclusion
- Gender justice and domestic and family violence
- Rights and advocacy.

### Questions asked during the forum

During the forum, the candidates were asked three questions, their responses are below.

#### **How will you ensure that there is an improvement in access for inclusive education for people with disabilities who really do need it?**

**Amy McMahon MP answer:** We know that Queensland state schools are already systemically underfunded, and so any additional funding that schools are getting for students with disability is only covering a small gap and isn't going all the way to making sure that schools are properly resourced to be able to support kids in the way that they need. If we were bringing up that base level of funding schools, would have the base level of staff, of teachers, of resource that they need, and then any additional funding would be going that further distance to be supporting. This is one of the key things to address, to make sure that our state schools are fully funded and then looking at the funding that is provided for kids with different needs to make sure that that they are getting the support that they need. Also making sure that state schools are genuinely free, because we know a lot of families are really struggling with additional out of pocket costs for the basics that they kids need at school, and obviously families who are struggling financially. Making sure that we are cutting out that living pressure that is on families as well, and they can be putting that funding, that that that money towards other things that they need on the whole, boosting our state school sector in particular, because we know that that is where a lot of students with disabilities go to school.

**Minister Charis Mullen MP answer:** Our government is investing a record 2.035 billion dollars in the education budget for students with disability. And we increase that by more than 29% since the last budget. We believe, and we recognise that every child and every young person deserves access to a high-quality public education, including students with disability and we also know that students with disability are disproportionately overrepresented in school disciplinary absence data. We recognise and we are investing in programs to support students with disability to make sure that they are getting a good start in their schooling journey. One of the things I would point out is our putting Queensland Kids First plan. And through that plan we have introduced GPs, family support coordinators, and behavioural specialists in some of our higher needs schools. I have got some in one of my electorates where I know we have a quite a few students with disability, and we are wanting to see those additional roles supporting our educators and providing that support to students with disability. When it comes to inclusive education, not every parent wants their child to go to a mainstream school. Through the Disability Royal Commission recommendations, we have noted the recommendation around ensuring that we continue to support special schools in our country. That is something that we have agreed to, because we recognise that it is about choice, and it is about choice for families as is home schooling as well for those families who choose to home school. One of the things we have both said that we will establish a ministerial, Inclusive Education Consultative Group. It is about providing ongoing advice to the Minister on any of the policies that relate to those recommendations and making sure that we are doing everything possible to provide students with disability the best start in their schooling journey and ongoing support as they go through into further education.

**Shadow Minister John-Paul Langbroek MP answer:** Being the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, I went to both special schools and saw, as Amy just mentioned, that it is state schools that take the bulk of students with disability because non-state schools, both the Catholic sector and independent schools sometimes will say they cannot cater for a particular student. In the state school sector, we tried to make sure that we could take everyone. So that is something that the state schooling sector is proudly doing. It is something I was proud to do as Minister to make sure that we restored state schooling back to a level where it was not just what I called the third option, and that meant appropriate funding often at an individual level for schools so they could pursue it, whether it was subjects or whatever it was that a principal wanted to do in conjunction with their community. The same thing applies for students with a disability that we want everyone to have equal opportunity. That is something we are all committed to doing. And when it comes to making sure that students with a disability provided for, then we have the record. The record is there to show that we certainly did that when we were in government.

I acknowledge what the Minister said about the Disability Royal Commission findings about saying we should close schools. I remember meeting with many parents, some of whom wanted their children mainstreamed and, as the Minister said, there were many others who said that they understood the challenges for children in mainstream, and that the need for schools continues. But importantly, I think across all three of us, we are saying that we are committed to making sure that students with disability are adequately taken care of in the state school system.

**Are you able to commit to a bipartisan approach in the lead up to the State Government election within the new government for Queensland?**

**Amy McMahon MP answer:** The Greens are keen to work with any and all parties to make sure that we get the funding that we need for these foundational supports, for border disability services to the federal government to make sure that people are not falling through the cracks and to increase that funding to mainstream services and advocacy.

**Minister Charis Mullen MP answer:** I want to make sure that we will continue to work where we can together, because this is too important to people with disability. We have had the Disability Royal Commission, the NDIS Review. There is a lot of change happening, and we need to make sure that we can provide stability to people with disability in Queensland and ensure that we continue to where we can work together to get the best outcome for Queenslanders with disability. That is my commitment in whatever role I am in following the election.

**Shadow Minister John-Paul Langbroek MP answer:** I can give you the absolute commitment as well. I know that there is no reason for anyone to think that we would not support the work that Charis is doing, trying to deal with the federal government who are forcing many of these services back onto Queensland. I have got the ministers release about the budget 160 million dollars we've committed to implementing all those things. I want to reassure everyone that we will work in a tripartisan way. In terms of the two major parties, we are on a unity ticket in terms of making sure that Queenslanders with disability continue to be taken care of.

**What will you and your party do to ensure that what is designed in respect of Foundational support delivers to people with a disability?**

**Amy McMahon MP answer:** I acknowledge there is a lot of uncertainty now about what financial supports are going to look like, particularly with people who have had experience in the way that the disability sector was run in Queensland prior to the introduction of the NDIS. We know that that sort of system was not working particularly well. But how could we be moving towards a sector where, for example, we have more services that are run by the State Government directly by the government, as opposed to being run by for profit or private entities? I think one of the focuses for the Greens will be making sure that funding for mainstream services is sufficient to make sure that those services can be providing support to people with disability who need it. To know that you can get access to a free GP that you are going to a fully funded and genuinely free state school, that you have access to housing that is affordable, I think, without that funding for those base services. It is very difficult for any additional funding to provide genuine improvements to people's lives. I encourage everyone to take part in the consultation about what foundational supports looks like and making sure that there is a robust system in place. That is has a section that is state run to make sure that people are not falling through the cracks.

**Minister Charis Mullen MP answer:** I do want to acknowledge that there is a lot of uncertainty in relation to foundational support. The key thing from our government's perspective is that we believe that we need to co-design what foundational supports will look like. We have reiterated this to the Federal government at multiple levels as have all states and Territories, because we

also appreciate that for all our states we need a place-based approach. What it looks like here in Queensland is not what it will look like in you know, in a city, Melbourne. What it looks like for regional people is not going to be the same as what it will look like for people in South Australia. It is important to recognise that we will work really hard, and we already have. I do want to agree with Amy in a sense that it is also not about duplicating what is already, and should be already available to our mainstream system, of health, education, transport, you know justice, all those things. There will be some general Foundational Supports, and there was a consultation on that that has started. There will be targeted supports as well, but we also want to make sure we are uplifting all our service systems when it comes to people with disability, and that is our commitment. And you can see that as we start to roll out some funding from the Queensland Government.

**Shadow Minister John-Paul Langbroek MP answer:** I have tabled a paper from several service providers who wanted to work together to design the Foundational Supports programs, many of whom are online today. It is from June the 20<sup>th</sup> 2024. This group said, we need to address current service gaps to meet the future needs of all Queenslanders with disability. As the Minister said, people with disability must be at the centre of co-design and development. And there are several aspects to the paper about key principles for success which include that a person-centred quality focused, equitable and accessible, for people in my party, many of whom are in regional, rural and rural areas, integrating with other systems. The design principles are so important that we work together with the sector and people who are affected.

## Questions raised during the forum

The remaining fifty-three questions raised during the forum have been split into themes and are listed below:

### Health

- Will the Queensland Government fund Positive Parenting for people with disability?
- With the changes to QCSS, how will you make sure that people with disability get the support they need beyond a short-term goal?
- What is your stance on immuno-inclusion and the ongoing segregation of immunocompromised and clinically vulnerable people?
- **Question for Amy MacMahon MP:** Community-integration acquired brain injury (ABI) services have exclusion criteria that discriminate against certain disabilities (due to limited resourcing). As a person with lived experienced of ABI, will you look into supporting the sustainability of service development implemented by the Statewide Brain and Spinal Cord Injury (BaSCI) Project, and consider additional resourcing for access equity?
- What will be the policy in health and disability as I belong to a group where people access both program areas access, will there be a point of coordination and delivery?
- With the limited number of specialists in rural and regional areas and extensive wait times, how are you going to increase the access to health for those in rural areas who cannot often afford to travel to Brisbane to access these appointments?

## Housing

- Many of us are feeling the pinch of the rising cost of living and housing/rental prices and for many of us, we incur higher costs to live closer to community and the services we need. What support would your government, if elected, provide? Will you commit to Liveable Housing Standards for legacy housing and new build housing stock?
- **Question for Minister Charis Mullen MP:** If you get re-elected what will you do about building new housing developments on the Sunshine Coast?
- I know many NDIS participants who require full time 24/7, 1:1 support for complex needs that are currently facing homelessness because the owners of those properties are now moving back into their property. There is zero stock from public housing, so they have no public housing options after four years of asking. Many cannot afford the private rental market unless sharing with other people and like over 95% of NDIS participants that are not being approved for SDA housing, they will be homeless or in hospital on social work admissions. If there is any concrete response or plan and can you outline this?
- **Question for John-Paul Langbroek MP:** What is the Liberal National Party's plan for getting every Queenslanders with a disability and their families into safe and appropriate housing, and how will they deliver healthcare especially emergency and hospital care?
- How will all parties support people with disability stuck in transitional housing to find permanent, secure and accessible homes?

## Employment

- Can you please investigate and report more employment data for disabled people in the Queensland Government?
- Can you please make a commitment that third party recruitment companies will be restricted from using AI or other algorithms that can reject disabled people in employment private and public settings in Queensland?
- Can you please ensure that third party recruitment companies must have mandatory hiring of disabled people in government and private employment and must undertake the process of requesting and documenting any reasonable adjustment report of any disabled person they place in government or private employment settings?
- **Question for John-Paul Langbroek MP:** Your tireless advocacy for improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities has been commendable. However, despite these efforts, Queensland still faces a significant disability employment gap, with the unemployment rate for people with disabilities at around double that of the general population. In particular, the participation rate for people with disabilities remains substantially lower, with only about 53% actively engaged in the workforce compared to 84% for those without disabilities. This disparity has a profound impact not only on individuals but also on our economy. Given the Liberal National Party's commitment to equal opportunities and your advocacy in this space, how does the Liberal National Party plan to address this persistent gap?

## Transport

- Can you please make it easier to use taxi subsidy cards interstate? If it goes federal people will be able to use taxi subsidy card, because in Queensland there is a lot of paperwork (pink form).

## Education

- How will students with disability be better supported? If they are not in a Student Support Unit, the school receives funding, but the student receives minimal additional support (meeting a key support teacher four times in two years - less than one hour per annum)?
- How will students with disability be better supported by Education Queensland when experiencing domestic and family violence? Vulnerable students with disability escaping domestic and family violence are currently 'supported' by the state system by incrementally cancelling enrolments in subjects due to lack of physical attendance (while in crisis accommodation).
- As per the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission, what will be done to ensure stronger oversight and enforcement of school's obligations around inclusive education, implementation and monitoring of the policies and procedures regarding reasonable adjustments, and ensuring the schools communication with parents is collaborative and valued rather than a tick box exercise?
- What will your governments do to appropriately support First Nations young people and those in out of home care their families?
- What support will we see to support parents with cognitive disabilities, to parent to prevent children from these families being taken into state care? And for those children of parents with disabilities, what supports will we see to reunite those families or support co-parenting arrangements with foster carers?
- How is it anticipated that the education system is overhauled to be able to support and resource schools in a way that support young people and children with disability to thrive rather than experience exclusion and disengagement, which has evidence that intersects into our justice system?
- In your first year, would you consider funding Spinal Life Australia to support the "Realistic Race" initiative in high schools across the Sunshine Coast?
- **Question for Minister Charis Mullen MP:** Why is parent choice only for parents of students with disability, not for parents who want to send their child to a school in a different catchment?

## Disability reforms

- Will the Queensland Government continue to fund advocacy?
- Regarding changes to the NDIS, specifically self-management, will participants be able to stay with same providers?
- Will it be an improved system compared to pre-NDIS in our state when people with some disabilities were automatically rejected from even being considered for support (regardless of severity or level of 'impairment' under the Queensland Disability Department)?
- **Question for Minister John-Paul Langbroek MP:** Federal and State Labor has given broad commitments, but I do not hear much concrete discussion on exactly what is being done in

Queensland, now NDIS is pushing much back to the state and foundational supports. Co-design is not occurring if federal/state decisions are unclear or surprising peak bodies and people living with disability like me who is active in the space nationally lacking information. I am worried hospitals and community services are about to be overwhelmed. What, in practical terms, would the Liberal National Party do if they win to prepare for this state-based response, which will have to be rapid, and action recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission that we still do not see acceptance of, or action on over 200 items after almost 12 months?

- How will you support those with disability who cannot access NDIS due to lack of capacity and lack of assistance with application? Members of the Functional Neurological Disorder community who cannot access QCSS, regularly go more than two weeks at a time without showering or assistance with food preparation.
- How will you support community groups who provide foundational supports as volunteers?
- How will Foundational Supports assist with personal protective equipment and assistive devices, like wheelchairs, to people who can ambulate at home but not in the community? I have needed a wheelchair for almost 5 years and cannot access one because QCSS does not assist.
- Co-design is a broad term. What does it mean to each of your parties? How will it work?
- **Question for Minister Charis Mullen MP:** What timeframe would the current government anticipate in their reform process, understanding that many are currently under supported through QCSS if they are able to access this support due to a significant demand for service?
- How do you propose to co-design a Targeted Foundational Supports Roadmap with clear timeframes for implementation?
- How would each party make the NDIS application process accessible and affordable?
- Will there be a policy focus on fostering and resourcing community inclusion in Foundational Supports?
- Do you envisage supporting volunteer-run groups to continue servicing their communities?
- How will the state government support the prevention of abuse and neglect of people with disability, in coordination with advocacy and labour forces skill development and police law enforcement?
- I am hearing comments to say the plan is to increase funded services by the state but isn't the change to NDIS because Australia wants to reduce costs and budgets? Are we investing more funds into disability services or not as the message we hear is cost blowouts have required legislative change to cut budgets and growth? Is the plan to move the planned billions cut from NDIS budgets through this legislation change back to states?

## Disaster and Emergency Planning

- Do you have a disaster management policy for people with disabilities?

## Digital Inclusion

- People need access to devices and internet for healthcare connection and information etc, will there be access to digital inclusion to overcome this (especially in rural and remote areas)?

## Gender justice and domestic and family violence

- Section 216 of the Act are they going to bring it forward? This would mean a woman or a man with intellectual disability cannot have sex with another person.
- How will the Say No campaign apply to people with intellectual disability? How will they be supported to understand if they are experiencing coercive control?
- How will women with disabilities will be supported as parents?

## Rights and advocacy

- A lot of people in jail have a disability - what support will they get when they are released from jail?
- Can visual smoke alarms be installed in all public places?
- What will you commit to for children with disabilities in foster care?
- I do have a question to all speakers about their continued funding of Queensland Family and Child Commission and supporting child rights initiatives?
- Queensland chose not to support 8.22 in the Disability Royal Commission about increasing age of criminal responsibility which directly impacts the amount of young people in justice, including a vast overrepresentation of disability and First Nations peoples. Considering this response, what does each party anticipate will be done about this level of overrepresentation if elected?
- Will your governments commit to long term sustainable funding to increase disability advocacy to more than 0.25% of the Queensland population with disability (that is currently funded)?

## Questions answered post-forum

All the questions raised during the forum were sent to candidates post-forum due to the time constraints on the day. Their responses to the questions are below.

### Amy MacMahon MP

**Question:** Community-integration acquired brain injury (ABI) services have exclusion criteria that discriminate against certain disabilities (due to limited resourcing). As a person with lived experienced of ABI, will you look into supporting the sustainability of service development implemented by the Statewide Brain and Spinal Cord Injury (BaSCI) Project, and consider additional resourcing for access equity?

**Response:** I will continue to advocate for the funding, resourcing and infrastructure needed to support people with acquired brain injuries, including advocating for those services and networks being developed in the Statewide Brain and Spinal Cord Injury (BaSCI) Project. It is distressing to



hear that some people with ABIs might be excluded from vital community integration services. On top of this, Queensland's wide geography means that people in rural and regional areas may struggle to access the services and support they need. I will advocate for the funding, resourcing needed to ensure every person with ABIs get access to the support and care they need.

I have seen up close how important inpatient and community rehabilitation services are, and I was lucky to be able to access the incredible services offered at the PA Hospital.

In addition, I will be advocating for more funding for our public health system, including advocating for public health clinics, free GPs, and access to 20 subsidized psychology sessions for every Queenslander. More details on these health initiatives are here - <https://greens.org.au/qld/GPclinics>

**Question:** Many of us are feeling the pinch of the rising cost of living and housing/rental prices and for many of us, we incur higher costs to live closer to community and the services we need. What support would your government, if elected, provide? Will you commit to Liveable Housing Standards for legacy housing and new build housing stock?

**Response:** Housing is a key priority for myself and the Greens, and people with disabilities are experiencing the housing crisis acutely. There is next to no affordable housing, and very little rentals that are affordable for people on the disability support pension or other payments. On top of this, there is a shortage of public housing, and very few properties that are accessible.

We will continue to advocate for:

- More investment in public housing, including ensuring that all new public housing aligns with Liveable Housing Standards.
- A rent freeze, and cap on rent increases.
- An empty homes levy, to get liveable homes back into the rental market.
- Limiting tax incentives for property investors at the Federal level, to help bring down the cost of housing.
- Advocating for all new housing to align with the highest level of Liveable Housing Standards, and high standards for sustainability and energy efficiency.

More details on the Greens housing policy are here - <https://www.amymacmahon.com/housing>

**Question:** How will students with disability be better supported? If they are not in a Student Support Unit, the school receives funding, but the student receives minimal additional support (meeting a key support teacher four times in two years - less than one hour per annum)?

**Response:** The Greens have been advocating for our state schools to be fully funded and genuinely free. At the moment, because state schools are underfunded, any additional funding that schools receive struggle to cover this funding gap. This full funding would mean that any additional funding that schools receive to support students with disability would be able to be better used

and fully applied to help students. The Greens will also advocate for additional funding for state schools, so that every Queensland child, regardless of ability, geography or income, can enjoy a great state education. More details on our school funding policy are here - <https://www.amymacmahon.com/schools>

**Question:** Do you have a disaster management policy for people with disabilities?

**Response:** Having assisted the community through the 2022 floods, I've seen up close how natural disasters can have profound impacts on people with disability. It was alarming to see these impacts, including the impacts of power outages, road closures, shop closures, access and clean up. Myself and my Greens colleagues were able to help mobilize volunteers to help with clean up, food and resources delivery, advocacy to government departments, and sharing information.

My office also held an online forum in collaboration with Queenslanders with Disability Network and Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion, on disaster preparedness for people with disability, details on this here - [https://www.amymacmahon.com/disability\\_disaster\\_preparedness](https://www.amymacmahon.com/disability_disaster_preparedness)

The Greens have also supported calls for more funding for disaster preparedness for the disabled community, and the development of a national plan and roadmap to deliver on disability-inclusive disaster preparedness, resilience, and recovery, more details here <https://greens.org.au/news/media-release/greens-support-queenslanders-disability-network-calls-better-disaster-response>

### **Minister Charis Mullen MP**

**Question:** If you get re-elected what will you do about building new housing developments on the Sunshine Coast?

A safe, affordable and accessible home is fundamental for the one in five Queenslanders living with disability, but we know they can face additional challenges accessing appropriate housing and getting or keeping a tenancy.

Queenslanders with disability will have a greater say in where and how they live as part of a four-year disability housing action plan, *Partnering for inclusive housing with Queenslanders with disability 2024-2027* which was released on 13 June 2024.

As an integral part of the *Homes for Queenslanders* long-term housing plan, *Partnering for inclusive housing* aims to deliver housing outcomes that meet the needs and preferences of people with disability, better protect people in residential services, and help people with disability to access and sustain private housing.

In listening to the voices of people with disability with the support of QDN, we are investing **\$55.9M** to implement *Partnering for inclusive housing* and to lay a strong foundation for the future.

*Partnering for inclusive housing* is accompanied by *Our co-design journey: what 'home' means to people with disability*, which further highlights what we heard through co-design and underpins what our priorities are.

**Question:** Why is parent choice only for parents of students with disability, not for parents who want to send their child to a school in a different catchment?

If families wish to enrol their child in a state school, students typically attend the state school closest to where they live.

However, parents are able to send their children to the state school of their choice, subject to Enrolment Management Plans criteria. <https://education.qld.gov.au/parents-and-carers/enrolment/management-plans>

Enrolment management plans are important to ensure there are sufficient facilities, resources and teaching staff available for all state schools in Queensland.

**Question:** What timeframe would the current government anticipate in their reform process, understanding that many are currently under supported through QCSS if they are able to access this support due to a significant demand for service?

The Commonwealth Government are undertaking further work to design foundational supports and prepare a Foundational Supports Strategy, including to determine the scope of services, cohorts of people to be supported, jurisdictional responsibilities and how foundational supports will operate.

It will be important that decisions on foundational supports are made by all jurisdictions, noting States and Territories will be co-funding the scheme, and the potential impacts on a range of mainstream service systems across the country.

Similarly, further consultation and co-design with people with a disability will be critical to informing the development of foundational supports.

Miles Labor Government is deeply committed to working with the Commonwealth and the sector to develop foundation supports services by mid-2025.

**Shadow Minister John-Paul Langbroek MP**

Confirmed that response will be provided shortly, not yet received.

## Next steps

It is exciting to know how many people are talking about and demonstrating their commitment to Queenslanders with disability in this election. The Queensland State Election is on Saturday the 26th of October. More information about voting, checking your enrolment, and finding your state electorate can be found on the [Australian Electoral Commission \(AEC\) website](https://www.aec.gov.au/).

## Acknowledgements

The Queensland Disability Alliance thanks the following speakers and partners for their involvement and contribution to the forum:

- Amy MacMahon MP, Queensland Greens
- AUSLAN interpreters David and Amanda, Deaf Connect
- Geoff Rowe, ADA Australia
- Jason McKey, National Disability Services
- Jennifer Black, Queensland Alliance for Mental Health
- Matilda Alexander, Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion
- Michelle Moss, Queenslanders with Disability Network
- Minister Charis Mullen MP, Australian Labor Party
- Shadow Minister John-Paul Langbroek MP, Liberal National Party
- Sharon Boyce, Queenslanders with Disability Network
- Uncle Paul Calcott,
- Uncle Willie Prince.

