

In 2009 around 4.5m Australians reported a disability of some kind and for 760,000 it was severe or profound. However, only 245,000 people are able to use specialist disability services under the Commonwealth State & Territory Disability Agreement. This means informal carers and people with disabilities themselves bear much of the cost of their disability or miss out altogether.

In 2005 unmet demand for people aged <65 years was for:

- Accommodation and respite – 23,000
- Therapy, early childhood intervention, counseling – 3,700
- Employment services – 1,700

The Disability Investment Group estimates that \$5b more is needed for care and support, aids and appliances, transport etc.

Services that do exist are poorly coordinated, have inconsistent assessment methods and lack of integration with the health system. Opportunities are lost for want of early intervention.

Thousands of young people with high support needs are currently in nursing homes where their social and rehabilitation needs are not met.

The Productivity Commission is inquiring into a national disability insurance scheme. This works well overseas and was called for by the Democrats and the sector years ago.

Meanwhile the Gillard Government promised a new disability strategy, a small package of assistance to some children with some impairments and just 150 new supported accommodation units!

..... inclusion for the **Disabled**

Our Plan

- Establish a **national disability insurance scheme**
- Substantially increase funding to in **supported accommodation**, respite and personal attendant services, using a population-based benchmark approach
- Expand the COAG **Young People In Nursing Homes** program to provide people with a choice about where they live and how they are supported
- Strengthen the CSTDA and reframe it based on **human rights** with improved transparency and accountability,
- A National **Equipment** Strategy to ensure people with disabilities can afford and access disability aids and equipment
- Ratify and incorporate into law the **UN Convention** on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Finalise and adopt the access to **premises standard**
- Fund annual comprehensive health checks for all Australians with a long term disability and encourage greater expertise in the medical profession in dealing with people with disabilities
- Fund a national **community awareness** campaign and significantly increase support for individual and systemic disability advocacy and support services
- Restore the Disability **Support Pension** eligibility to pre-2006 criteria and remove the harsh penalties and assessment and participation requirements, which do not take into account health needs, from the Welfare to Work Act
- Increase the number of places in the Disability **Employment** Network for people on the Disability Support Pension who do not have mutual obligation requirements
- Increase investment in programs that support **employers** to take on people with disabilities and reduce workplace barriers and encourage flexible working arrangements that can accommodate the needs of people with disabilities
- Introduce strong incentives to take up full and part time work by reforming the tax system, judicious use of direct cash incentives etc that will give people more **financial reward** for their efforts.