



# ***"MEDIA RELEASE"***

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## **"Dr Paul Collier R.I.P"**

### **A Great South Australian!**

Dr Paul Collier, author, historian and respected disability advocate and candidate with *Dignity for Disability* in the 2010 South Australian State election, will be farewelled tomorrow, Thursday March 18th at 1:30pm at Centennial Park, Goodwood Road, Pasadena.

The funeral will be followed by a celebration at the Tonsley Hotel, 1274 South Road, Clovelly Park.

Paul Collier was a remarkable man! There are many people who aspire to great wealth, great success or great fame and who in the end despite what ever their achievements impress no-one but themselves. Paul Collier impressed, not because of his boyish good looks, not because of his engaging smile, gentleman like pommy charm or obvious intellect but because he wanted to make a difference.

Paul was a leader who people looked up to and listened too. He was not a man who sought personal publicity. Paul was a man who truly believed he could make a difference and was determined to do so.

He straddled long term sector divides between the physically and intellectually disabled putting aside ideological rifts for the benefit of the greater good.

Paul understood the disability sector will only get appropriate support when it unites and puts behind it the old days when some strangely believed they had a right to tell others how to live . Paul truly believed in choice.

When Paul's luck took a turn for the worse at age 21 it was not the end but a new beginning. Paul lived in a way we would all admire and his handling of adversity was a real life example and a positive reminder life is only what we make of it and that maybe, for many of us, our problems are more imagined than serious. But when his hand was dealt he responded like very few have or ever will, he has been an inspiration to many. I have only known Paul for 8 years and I wish I had known him earlier and I desperately wish I could have known him for a long long time to come!

In the time I knew him Paul was simply magnificent ,we lunched together often as we plotted and schemed to overthrow governments

Paul was a long term student of politics, formerly a very active ALP branch member, (but more recently very disenchanted) who believed that politicians should make a difference

We shared a common disdain for Mike Rann who's failed promises and careless handling of the truth we found offensive. If some one told me Paul was reading the 2010 ALP policy at the time of the massive stroke, in which Rann launched another major howler by claiming \$31 million of money announced in previous budgets as "new money" I could imagine Paul's angst.

Paul and I in recent weeks were encouraged that Mike's days as SA leader of the ALP appear numbered with either the voters or the ALP power brokers sure to get him soon. While I dislike political parties in general I still highly respect some politicians like disability stalwarts Frances Bedford, Grace Portalesi, Chris Hanna and Robert Brokenshire and my local member David Pisoni..... but Paul had become increasingly very cynical given his genuine ALP background and personal beliefs.

Paul had little time for the Liberals and would not be amused that the disability policy Isobel Redmond presented as Shadow Minister in 2006 was tens of millions and of dollars better than the current policy which is questionably even "deposit money" to fund the forward promises. Paul and I had discussed the Liberal aim that clearing the critical category one waiting lists looked virtually impossible. We shared concern that the shadow that service cuts of the lowest funded disability sector in the nation may happen, under the guise of self managed funding becoming a cost saving strategy. Paul was not a Liberal true believer and who they really stood for and I agreed that regardless of what Rann promised he would never fix the disability sector hence Paul's insistence that D4D must go on.

Sometimes we argued, because Paul was strongly opinionated and more than a little stubborn, traits I could relate to!

Such traits are essential if you are going to stay the trip as a disability advocate it would appear and combined with our common philosophically and ideological base around consumer driven choice and his persistence and resolve that that I held in awe we charged on!

In the toughest days of our early D4D initiatives his effervescence and energy never wavered, without his resolve D4D may have quickly disappeared

When Paul stood as the inaugural D4D Legislative Council candidate in 2006 he genuinely believed he could win a seat

We can only imagine the change Paul would have driven if he had ever been Premier even for just one day?

The world of disability services in SA would have changed for ever!

For the 2010 SA election Paul hounded me incessantly to do it all again! The stress and strain was enormous last time and my resolve was questionable.

But Paul did not waiver. He rolled his sleeves up and got going.

And now with the finishing line in sight of another positive D4D campaign Paul is tragically gone!

He may be gone from our lives but not our hearts. On the day that I die, I hope I will be proud of the life I have lived I treasure my family, my achievements, friends and my career but mostly I will be proud of my advocacy work. Like many I would like to feel I have made a contribution? But deep in my heart I will know always that some of my targets were only

achieved because I was fortunate enough to meet, befriend and work along side Dr Paul Collier . He was a wise man, a clever man and a good man and his efforts in being one of South Australia's leading disability advocate over the last 20 years should be recognised

After the election in my role as Chair of Disability Speaks we will be supporting Paul's family in attempting to create a lasting memory of Paul's achievements. Paul must be long remembered given his contribution and that he was the first to stand on a SA disability ticket for our parliament. We hope many of you will join with us in petitioning for recognition in line with the Collier family wishes for recognition of a great South Australian

We also hope one day a person representing the disability sector will be elected to parliament Paul would be extra proud if that happens!!  
That must remain a long term aim!

I will vote D4D in the upper house on Saturday, not because of Paul but because of what the D4D party stands for!

I hope you consider doing so as well!

After this election, whatever the outcome Paul would want strong disability advocacy to go on!

We hope Paul's baton will pass to some one with his special qualities  
Paul leaves enormous shoes to fill

Rest in peace Paul  
Forever with us!

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