

Disability Services

A Vision for disABILITY



A Vision for disABILITY

Contents	Page
THE VISION	3
PURSUING THE VISION	4
SUPPORTING PARTICIPATION BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY	5
STRENGTHENING FAMILIES & NETWORKS OF SUPPORT	6
FOCUSSING ON SERVICES TO THE PERSON	7
GENERAL	7
GOVERNMENT SERVICES	7
NON-GOVERNMENT SERVICES	8
MAKING MAINSTREAM SERVICES MORE ACCESSIBLE	9
ACCESS SUPPORT	9
COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING	10

A Vision for disABILITY

The Vision

The South Australian community is strengthened and enriched when each person is able to live to the best of their skills and experience and in accord with their values and aspirations.

While all of us experience challenges in our lives (e.g. as children or when ill), some people live with ongoing challenges arising from significant impairments (e.g. with a disability or as they age).

Whether the challenge is temporary or ongoing, vulnerable people often need support to remain safe and to live full lives.

345,000 South Australians have an ongoing disability – 89,000 have a disability so significant that they need support for tasks of everyday living.¹ Over 500 people are in crisis, waiting for that support.²

In recent years South Australia has been shocked by revelations of people with disability in need, even to the point of being harmed by loved ones.

Many South Australians with disability and those who care for them feel vulnerable and unsupported, isolated and devalued.

They need the whole community, but particularly the Government, to support them as they strive to lead decent and full lives.

A Redmond Liberal Government will provide leadership, actively pursuing a *Vision for disABILITY* - to lead the nation as a State which supports “full and effective participation and inclusion” by people with disability.³ We will work with the broader South Australian community to embrace that aspiration and make it a reality.

With vision and action, we can make South Australia a strong, inclusive community.



Isobel Redmond MP
Leader of the Opposition



Stephen Wade MLC
Shadow Minister for Disability

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2003*

² Disability SA, *Disability Services Unmet Need, November 2009*

³ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Art. 3

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Pursuing The Vision

A Redmond Liberal Government is committed to developing and implementing a plan in our first term to bring our vision to reality.

First Steps

As the first steps in the first twelve months, we will:

1. **Engage** – establish a peer visiting program where people or families with disability will be visited at an early stage by another person with disability or a parent to help them envision and pursue a decent life – for infants this will build on the home visits already provided for new parents;
2. **Support** – fast-track the development and implementation of individualised funding and ensure that all clients who wish to access individualised funding are able to do so by the end of our first term; and
3. **Preserve** – plan and deliver support so that no person with disability is at immediate and high risk of harm to themselves or others through a lack of support, thereby eliminating the crisis waiting list.

The Plan

Within our first year of government, a Redmond Liberal Government will produce a *Vision for disABILITY Plan* with the following elements:

1. **Facing the challenge** – produce a comprehensive assessment of the current and future prevalence of disability and of the support people with disability will need.
2. **Focussing on the person** – put people with disability and their carers in control of decisions about their support, in particular, through individualised funding and person-centred support and planning.
3. **Delivering more services** – increase resources and undertake sector reform with the urgent objective to eliminate the crisis waiting list (Category 1) within the first term of a Liberal Government.

A Redmond Liberal Government will provide \$10m additional funding over four years to target the Category 1 waiting list.

4. **Promoting quality of services** – enhance the quality of services including through a new Disability Services Act which reflects the values of the UN Convention and through a strong quality assurance program with elements such as independent advocacy and information, a community visitor's scheme and a restrictive practices regime.

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Supporting Participation by People With Disability

Fundamental to the *Vision for disABILITY* is the delivery of support in a way which supports self-determination and individual responsibility.

The Liberal Party believes that people with a disability are entitled to a reasonable level of support to fulfil their potential and pursue their aspirations – and to have a real say in how that support comes to them.

It is time for government to put the people who use the support in control of their lives and to empower them to envision and create better futures.

The Liberal Party believes that people with disability and those who support them understand their support needs better than politicians or bureaucrats.

People with disability know their own circumstances best, they know their values, they know the risks they are willing to take and, in the end, they have the right to make their own choices about their own lives.

A State Liberal Government will:

- Develop and implement a South Australian model of individualised funding, drawing on world's best practice, as committed to by the Liberal Party in 2009.
- Ensure that all clients who wish to access individualised funding are able to do so by the end of the first term of government.
- Reform disability services to pursue person-centred support and planning.
- Revise the *Disability Services Act 1993* to promote quality and ensure that people with a disability are the focus of the Act.
- Review State Government policies and programs in the light of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.
- Provide funding for advocacy and information services.
- Support the active consideration by the Commonwealth of a National Disability Insurance Scheme to support all people with disability.

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Strengthening Families and Networks Of Support

Families and carers of people with disability often provide the bulk of the support to a person and are integral to coordinating current services and advocating for future services.

But unmet need for support is high - over 3000 people are languishing on the waiting lists including over 500 people classified as at immediate and high risk of harm to themselves or others.⁴

Families of people with disability often provide high levels of support for many years yet have no assurance that their loved ones will be able to access ongoing support when they need it.

People with disability and their families need to be provided with support so that they remain in control of the decisions that affect them and are supported to build a sustainable mix of formal (paid) assistance and informal assistance.

A State Liberal Government will:

- Provide early, quality information and support.
- Support families to move to a positive and successful future, including through provision of a peer visiting program.
- Improve access to respite services for parents and families.
- Help link individuals and families with support from other families and organisations.
- Deliver forward-looking planning, in particular, planning to sustain care beyond the availability of key carers, such as ageing parents.
- Ensure that needs assessment for people with a disability include an assessment of the health needs of both the person with disability and their carers.
- Recognise the particular needs of young carers and siblings and strive to sustain relationships into adulthood.
- Foster the establishment and expansion of services in rural and regional areas to promote choice for people with disability.

⁴ Disability SA, *Disability Services Unmet Need*, June 2009

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Focussing on Services to the Person

While Labor spin focuses on funding inputs, a Redmond Liberal Government will focus on service outcomes - improvements in the lives of people with disability and those who care for them.

Maximising outcomes will involve staging increased investment and reform measures, including:

- fast tracking implementation of a strong individualised funding model;
- reducing administration costs for people with disabilities; and
- supporting and fostering informal care and community inclusion.

General

A State Liberal Government will:

- Report regularly on the level of unmet need in the South Australian community for disability support, accommodation and equipment.
- Ensure competitive neutrality between government and non-government service provision, including fair resourcing of administration.
- Ensure that assessments of individuals support needs are up-to-date, objective and consistent.
- Develop and implement a quality assurance program.

Government Services

A State Liberal Government will:

- Refocus the Department of Families and Communities to be more efficient, transparent and responsive through the use of individualised funding, forward-looking planning and person-centred support and planning.
- Provide funding for disability equipment on a recurrent basis, giving priority to developing services to meet complex communication needs.
- Review the need for a specialised disability equipment scheme.

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Non-Government Services

A State Liberal Government will:

- Reform funding relationships with the non-government sector to refocus funding accountability on outcomes for people with a disability.
- Provide equitable cost-related indexation to non-government services.
- Work with established service providers to help them adapt to reforms.
- Encourage service providers to offer their services to as wide a client group as possible and to broaden the range of services they offer.
- Ensure the sustainability of service providers in the face of the GFC.
- Work with service provider peak organisations to promote capacity development.

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Making Mainstream Services More Accessible

People with disability need to be able to readily access their communities and mainstream services.

Yet they often face barriers in access to services, including transport, employment, education, and recreation.

A State Liberal Government will:

- Improve disability access to public transport and continue the upgrade of South Australia's transport fleet.
- Increase the time limits for multi-trip tickets used by people with disability.
- Allow access cab users to aggregate their vouchers.
- Establish an ASD-specific school to provide a base for a range of ASD-specific services.
- Ensure that all new government buildings and projects are disability accessible and that current access does not diminish.
- Improve disability car parking by increasing the number and size of car parks and ensuring eligibility is equitable.

Access Support

Community engagement and accessibility is more than just the physical environment. We need to provide support to place people living with disability alongside their peers without disability.

By removing barriers to self-determination, we strengthen the capacity of individuals to build their own lives.

A State Liberal Government will:

- Maintain effective oversight and promotion of accessibility to mainstream and community services, including through refreshing the Promoting Independence strategy.
- Support local government leadership in promoting community inclusion, particularly through the establishment of access officers.
- Ensure all South Australian Government services and government-funded services recognise the Companion Card.

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Community Capacity Building

Cooperation and mutual support are the cornerstones of inclusive, sustainable and resilient communities.

Inclusive communities are the foundation on which individuals and families can achieve their full potential and often become significant contributors.

To build inclusive communities, South Australia must promote active citizenship and a wider understanding of the abilities and needs of people with a disability.

A State Liberal Government will:

- Provide leadership in pursuing our *Vision for disABILITY* - leading the nation as a State which supports “full and effective participation and inclusion” by people with disability.⁵
- Promote community awareness of the needs of people with a disability, particularly for an inclusive community.
- Develop a South Australian strategy to promote community inclusion, building on the National Disability Strategy.
- Support local communities to foster inclusive communities.

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⁵ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Art. 3