



We're Mad as Hell

We're not taking it anymore - and there are millions of us

Over 10,000 people take Mad as Hell Pledge

The grassroots, electoral web campaign Australians Mad as Hell started by two mothers of disabled sons has quickly won strong support all around the country for an overhaul of Australia's dysfunctional disability system to deliver better outcomes to people with disabilities and their families.

10,108 people from every State and Territory took the Mad as Hell Pledge, at www.australiansmadashell.com.au, from late March to early May, stating they intend to vote for political parties that support the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme with individualised funding in the next term of government. Individualised funding (personalised or self-directed funding) ensures people with disabilities and/or their families determine the best use of allocated funds, as occurs now in most other wealthy nations.

Noting that Australia's current disability support system forces people with severe disabilities and their families to struggle without the basic prescribed equipment, essential therapy, support and services they need, campaign organisers Sue O'Reilly in Sydney and Fiona Porter in Brisbane are not surprised by such a rapid and electorally significant response.

"Everyone who has a severe disability or who cares for someone with a severe disability knows how bad the system is. But ordinary citizens – as a critical mass – had few if any ways to make the depth of their feelings known to politicians until we set up the website australiansmadashell.com.au with its Pledge of voting intent," says Porter.

O'Reilly warns that the groundswell of "widespread, deep anger" about the lack of action by all political parties will increase in the lead-up to this year's federal election as people with disabilities and their families learn more about the properly funded, person-centred disability support systems operating successfully in other wealthy countries like the UK, Canada and New Zealand.

"Disability reform is a major issue for many voters," says O'Reilly. "This early, strong response of over 10,000 Mad as Hell Pledges should alert all political parties that a very large group of voters demand Australia's broken disability system be fixed. People with disabilities of any age have a right to be part of ordinary, mainstream life. And Mad as Hell Pledges will continue to be collected right up to the day of this year's federal election."

The two mothers say that supporters of a national disability insurance scheme with individualised funding include political, academic, business, medical, therapy and educational leaders, along with disability rights advocates Robbi Williams, National Convenor In-Control Australia, Lesley Hall, CEO of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations and Mark Pattison, executive director of the National Council of Intellectual Disability.

**PAGE 2 List of eminent Australians who support Mad as Hell call for change
What will be the cost to taxpayers if politicians don't act now?**



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Eminent Australians who support a national disability insurance scheme with individualised funding include:

ROBBI WILLIAMS, CEO Julia Farr Group & National Convenor In-Control Australia

LESLEY HALL, CEO Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

MARK PATTISON, Executive Director National Council of Intellectual Disability

DR IONA NOVAK, Head of Research Cerebral Palsy Institute, School of Medicine University Notre Dame

BILL MOSS AM, Chairman, Moss Capital & Member, Disability Investment Group

ELENA KATRAKIS, CEO Carers NSW

GRACE FAVA, President Autism Advisory & Support Service

ASSOC PROF BOB DAVIS, Director Centre for Developmental Disability Health VIC, Monash University

IAN COHEN MLC, Greens Party, Parliament of New South Wales

DR LINDA GRAHAM, ARC Discovery Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Research on Social Inclusion, Macquarie University

PROF DINAH REDDIHOUGH, Paediatrician, Yooralla Board Member

MARINA VIT, CEO & **DAVID CONRY**, Chairman Youngcare

PROF ROBERT CUMMINS, Personal Chair, School of Psychology Deakin University

CATHERINE MURRAY, Community Cabinet activist

WARREN HAYES, disability rights activist

TANIA HAYES, 2007 NSW Carer of the Year

KATE STROHM, Executive Director, Siblings Australia

MOIRA RAYNER, President, Genetic Support Network of Victoria

JIM CONWAY, musician and fundraising activist for people with multiple sclerosis

ASSOC PROF EILEEN WILLIS, Head Social Health Sciences & Assistant Dean Medical and Health Programs, School of Medicine, Flinders University

HEIKE FABIG, President, Association for Children with Disability NSW

ALAN JONES AO, Presenter Radio 2GB

PAM WEBSTER, President 2007-2009 Carers Australia

JANE WORTHINGTON, Health Editor, Woman's Day

CHERYL KOENIG, disability activist and NSW Woman of the Year 2009

MARY LOU CARTER, Founder, Carers Alliance Party

JAMES VALENTINE, musician, ABC radio presenter

MAX JACKSON & MARGARET RYAN, Principals, JacksonRyan Partners

JEAN TOPS, President Gippsland Carers Assoc, founding member National Carers Coalition

What will be the cost to taxpayers if we don't act now?

Australia urgently needs an efficient, 21st century system to deliver timely, person-centred support to people with severe disabilities of all ages, their families and carers. Without this reform, taxpayers will pay a far higher economic price in the future than we pay today for our current broken and inefficient disability system.

- Government spending in 2010 on Australia's dysfunctional disability system: \$8.7 billion
- Current disability income support and carer payments: \$11.5 billion per annum
- Nine State/Territory/Federal disconnected, bureaucratic, ration-based disability systems
- Waiting lists for support, services and crucial equipment that stretch for years
- Two million people and families pushed to the edge of our society unable to work, shop, take public transport, visit friends and be part of and contribute fully to the community
- People with severe disability now: 1.4 million. Projected growth: 2.9 million by 2030
- Around 700,000 unpaid full-time family caregivers now – many providing 24/7 lifelong care
- Unpaid carer capacity to decline as population ages and female workforce participation rises
- 10% reduction in unpaid care translates into a 40% increased need for funded services

Governments must take responsibility NOW to plan a cost-effective, no-fault national disability support system to improve outcomes for Australians with severe disabilities in the future. The Productivity Commission is currently examining how such a scheme can be successfully funded and operated, and will report back to the Federal Government by July 2011.