

## **Election policy apathy will hurt Australians with disabilities**

***Community care provider asks parties to consider long-term funding reform for disability services as opposed to one-off spending promises***

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Australians with disabilities and their carers could be amongst the Federal Election's biggest losers with major parties failing to address housing and funding issues with disability services, according to Just Better Care, a premier community care provider.

In Australia, there is an alarming number of people who have cared for or are caring for a family member with a disability, or knows of a family doing so. Many of these families currently fall through a huge gap in Australia's disability support services as there is a real lack of affordable housing options for older people with disability, who have lived at home all their lives with their now elderly parents.

Trish Noakes, Founder and Director of Just Better Care, said major parties have spoken generally about their aged and disability care plans in the lead-up to the election but the lack of long-term funding plans for people with disability and their carers, who voluntarily provide the bulk of care, has dropped off the radar.

"The simple fact is that the disability service system is massively underfunded, overly bureaucratic and is not holding up. In addition, there is a gross shortage of affordable accommodation for people with a disability. In many instances, people are forced to move into areas away from their established networks, which can be problematic because the chance of having a reasonably normal life comes with remaining in areas where the individual has a connection and access to transport," Noakes said.

"It's time to introduce a new national safety net, ensuring peace of mind for all Australians should they or someone they love become severely disabled," Noakes continued.

Just Better Care is asking the parties to consider reform in the following areas:

- Introducing a modern, forward-thinking National Disability Insurance Scheme providing funding for essential care, support, therapy, aids, equipment, home modifications and access to the community, education and training.
- Increasing flexibility and range of long-term accommodation supports in the community available for people with a disability.
- Making disability support available to all Australians as and when they need it.

- Supporting initiatives that assist people with disability and their carers to give them quality choices.
- Assisting community care providers to remain viable to best enable people to stay at home.
- Adequate funding to ensure that people are paid properly and ensure the attraction and retention of a long-term skilled workforce.

As the Australian population ages, Just Better Care experiences on a daily basis how older parent carers struggle to find solutions in the future for who will step in within the limited funding options and existing disability service programs to care for their adult children with disability once they are unable to do so themselves.

“Without a comprehensive funding plan to meet future needs, Australia faces social disaster as an entire generation of older parent carers die, other carers and people with disabilities become increasingly isolated from the community, and many more families collapse under the strain,” Noakes continued.

According to Just Better Care, supporting Australians with disability and their carers must be one of the nation’s first priorities and should have the unrestrained support of all political parties. Just Better Care is therefore looking for commitments from the major parties to meet the current challenges of the disability care system to help Australian families to get individualised, self-directed funding, providing them with the opportunity to care for their loved ones as needed, because it could happen to anyone.

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### **About Just Better Care**

Established in 2005, Just Better Care is a provider of quality care choices enabling people to live independently with dignity and comfort at home. An Australian network of locally-owned agencies, Just Better Care offers a range of services including personal, palliative and dementia care, nursing, medication and wound care, as well as domestic assistance and outings for social support.

Just Better Care has more than 18 franchises across New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT, and will soon be opening in Victoria and Tasmania.

[www.justbettercare.com.au/](http://www.justbettercare.com.au/)

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