

**SENATOR CAROL BROWN  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DISABILITY AND CARERS  
SENATOR FOR TASMANIA**

**LABOR WILL PUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND CARERS FIRST**

A Shorten Labor Government will improve services and support for carers, as well as invest in making Australia more accessible and inclusive.

Almost one in five Australians identify as living with disability, and Labor believes the right support should be available for people, regardless of whether they are eligible for the NDIS.

There are over 2.6 million carers in Australia whose contribution is valued at over \$1 billion a week, but caring can be invisible work which is easily overlooked by government.

A Shorten Labor Government will listen to people with disability and carers, and consider their rights and needs when making decisions across Government.

This starts with our commitments to improve supports, services, inclusion and accessibility.

**Labor's plan for carers includes:**

- **\$66 million boost to carer respite** – the equivalent of more than 42,000

extra overnight care sessions per year from July 2020. Carers report that access to respite is the single most important issue they face.

- **\$7 million for 25 extra Centrelink Carer Specialists** – to reduce phone and processing waiting times and provide accurate advice to carers
- **Making it easier to balance caring and work** – allowing Carers Allowance recipients to meet their mutual obligation requirements for other payments by applying for part-time rather than full-time work.
- **Better processes** – Labor will work with carers to co-design and improve the Carer Allowance, Carer Payment and Department of Veterans Affairs application processes.
- **Two-year review of the Integrated Carer Support Service** – to make sure the new system is working for carers.
- **\$250,000 in catch-up funding for Carers Australia** – ending the indexation freezes and delivering better support for carers and improve recognition through Carers Week.
- **National Carers Strategy** – Labor will re-instate a National Carers Strategy and make carers a cross-government priority. This will include annual reporting on the contribution and wellbeing of carers, the actions government will take to support carers, and establishing an advisory group to support the development of the strategy.
- **Better NDIS planning** – Labor will make the completion of a Carer Statement a standard part of the NDIS planning process, to make sure NDIS plans help people to care sustainably.

Labor also supports the Young Carer Bursary Program.

## **Labor's plan to improve accessibility and inclusion will start with:**

- **\$10 million advocacy boost** – doubling federal investment in disability representative organisations. With the NDIS continuing to roll out, and the demands of the Royal Commission, the work of advocates will only become more important.
- **\$9.5 million to improve healthcare for people with intellectual disability** – including better training for nurses and doctors and piloting intellectual disability health workers in 10 Primary Health Networks.
- **Six per cent Australian Public Service disability employment target by 2022** – increasing the number of people with disability in the federal public service by 3,500 in Labor's first term. This is an interim target on a pathway to further improvement, not a distant promise two elections away.
- **\$4 million for audio description at the ABC and SBS** – Australia is the only English-speaking OECD country without audio description. This will give more Australians access to our public broadcasters.
- **\$2 million for inclusive publishing** – Labor will partner with the sector to deliver the Australian Inclusive Publishing Initiative. Currently only five per cent of books are accessible. Labor will change this.
- **\$2 million for disability sport** – including \$1 million to help more athletes attend the next Special Olympics Junior and National Games and \$1 million so RecLink can expand AAA Play and connect more people with disability and their families with sport and recreation activities.
- **\$500,000 for the National Disability Awards** – Labor will undo the Liberals' cuts and work with people with disability on a new approach to

the awards.

- **A new National Disability Strategy** – Labor will act on the recommendation of the Productivity Commission and develop a new strategy in the context of the NDIS. We will seek agreement from the states to close the gaps between mainstream services and the NDIS. The new strategy will set clear and reported targets for employment, education, housing, transport, justice, health and reducing young people in nursing homes.

This is in addition to Labor's commitment to reverse the Liberals' cuts to schools, including additional investment of \$300 million for students with disability in the next three years.

Labor has also released a comprehensive plan to fix the NDIS – available [here](#).

This election is a choice between better services and supports for people with disability and carers, or bigger tax handouts to the top end of town under the Liberals.

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Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP, Canberra.