

ADDE

Australians for Disability and Diversity Employment



NEWSLETTER

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Hi all,

With the federal election fast approaching I have put together a newsletter prior to election day with the aim of producing a snapshot of the election campaign so far, and concentrating in particular on disability employment issues. In some ways this has been easy – there has not been a lot of policy announcements on this issue so not much to write about! In other ways it has been a hard task. The Labor Party website covers its employment of people with disability policy under the major heading of the National Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020. Having ploughed through this I have pulled out the relevant sections dealing with employment. The Liberal party website was very difficult to access and came up with no disability employment policy. I have gleaned bits and pieces and put together what I could. I have emailed Senator Mitch Fifield (the opposition spokesman on disability) regarding this and have yet to hear anything back. The Greens had the easiest website to search and their employment policy was included in their general disability policy. Greens are big on ideas but not so big on specifics so have a look and see what you think.

The quotes for this newsletter highlight the fact that in Australia we still have a long way to go in attitude change with regards to disability. While we all would like to be able to cut through when it comes to political correctness we need to be reminded of the importance of using our words with care and thought – we need to understand that in the 21st century, marginalized groups will not sit back and be trampled over. Verbal bullying in all its guises will not and should not be tolerated.

ADDE will have a new home from 1st September, 2010. Have a look at the newsflash on page 2. Also on page 2 is a media release distributed to various organisations around employment of people with disability in the Australian Public Service which highlights the poor statistics of the government and shows a lack of leading from the front.

Good luck with your decision on August 21st and I hope the result means improved outcomes for employment of people with disability.

Kathy Leitch

- **QUOTES OF THE (ELECTION) SEASON:**

“So what I want to do is..... to make sure that we go straight out of Question Time into the Matter of Public Importance debate without waffley ministerial statements on this like the accessibility of cinemas.” Tony Abbott, Leader Federal Liberal/National Party, interview with Laurie Oakes, The Today Show, 2/8/10

“You’d have to be pretty handicapped not to appreciate that this Government is dissolving before your eyes daily” Andrew Peacock, past leader of Liberal Party of Australia, ABC 24 News program, 9/8/10

- **NEWSFLASH:**

ADDE office to be relocated from 1 September to AFDO (Australian Federation of Disability Organizations), which is the peak body representing the consumers with disability in Australia. We will have two workstations in Ross House Flinders Lane Melbourne CBD.

This partnership between ADDE and AFDO will be a great opportunity to enable views of our members to be heard and acted upon much more effectively by all levels of Government.

- **ADDE MEDIA RELEASE:**

EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE

In 2003-2004, under the Howard government, people with disabilities made up 3.8 per cent of ongoing Australian Public Service (APS) employees, down from 5.8 per cent 1993-1994 (Australian Public Service Commission, *State of the Service Report 2003-04.*)

In 2007 the Rudd government made a number of commitments to increase employment of people with disability, stating in their party policy platform: “improve access to employment”.

So it is disappointing that the proportion of people with disability employed in the Australian Public Service has fallen by a further 0.8%. (“Between 1999 and 2008, the employment of people with disability fell from 4.9 per cent to 3.1 per cent.” National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy 2009, pg 6). This figure does not take into account the many improvements the government has now put in place such as the disability employment services changes, the results of which have not yet born fruit; however, we believe that improvements to Australian Public Service employment statistics will more easily occur if best practice in employment of people with disability is encouraged from the senior levels of government departments.

We note that the national strategy report supports this development: “**The Australian Public Service Commission will develop training and best practice advice for Australian Public Service agencies and managers**” (National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy 2009, pg 5) and “**to set a strong example to all Australian employers through the direct employment of people with disability in the Australian Public Service**” (National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy 2009, pg 20)

With this in mind we are hoping to draw the Federal Government’s attention to ADDE’s Best Practice in Employment of People with Disability workshops which can play a part in changing

attitudes from the top hierarchy of organizations. These workshops are designed to help implement strategies as outlined in our “Leading from the Front” research project (go to <http://afcl.org.au/adde/resources/Events/Pages/Survey.aspx> and click on report). Australians for Disability and Diversity Employment (ADDE) are a national disability employment advocacy organization with membership of over 450 (see website www.adde.org.au).

This training is delivered by people with disabilities who have expertise and passion and are creating their own employment opportunities as trainers and consultants.

- **ELECTION 2010 SNAPSHOT:**

Australian Labour Party

Disability employment policy:

- ECONOMIC SECURITY is the aim of the Labour policy. To achieve economic security the following areas must be included in disability employment policy: housing, pension payments, access, inclusiveness, rights, protection, justice and legislation. These areas are all looked at in the National Disability Strategy 2010 -2020, which forms the basis for the Labour Party’s policy.

Policy Direction

Increased access to employment opportunities is a key to improving economic security and personal wellbeing for people with disability, their families and carers.

Policy action if elected:

- Improve employer awareness of the benefits of employing people with disability.
- Reduce barriers and disincentives for the employment of people with disability.
- Encourage innovative approaches to employment of people with disability such as social enterprises, or initiatives to assist people with disability establish their own small business.
- Improve employment recruitment and retention of people with disability in all levels of public sector employment, and in funded organisations.
- Develop innovative approaches to future financial planning including private provision for people with disability, their families and carers.
- Develop innovative options to improve affordability and security of housing across all forms of tenure.
- At the review points of the National Affordable Housing Agreement and related National Partnership agreements, parties agree to consider including strategies consistent with the National Disability Strategy, to ensure they address the housing needs of people with disability.
- Consider the implications for economic security for people with disability, their families and carers arising from investigation into a national long term care and support scheme.
- Draft trend indicators and measurement tools are an integral part of the policy

Liberal Party

Disability Employment Policy:

To create more employment opportunities for senior Australians, the Federal Liberal Party will introduce a Seniors Employment Incentive Payment. The Incentive Payment will be paid to employers who hire a jobseeker aged 50 years or older.

The Incentive Payment will be worth up to \$250 a fortnight, for a total subsidy for 6 months of \$3,250 for employing a worker on a full time basis. The Incentive Payment will be paid in a single lump sum directly to the employer after six months continuous employment by the eligible worker. To qualify for the Incentive Payment, employees will need to serve a period of continuous employment of six months.

The Incentive Payment is designed to help employers overcome any reluctance to taking on older jobseekers and will be paid for workers who are registered with Centrelink at the time of their employment, including the unemployed, people with a disability and age pensioners.

Australian Greens Party

Disability Employment Policy:

Goals

The Australian Greens want:

- people who experience disability to be integrally involved in all levels of decision and policy making, including in their own service development and delivery.
- people to participate fully in all aspects of life, including education, training and employment, regardless of disability.
- people to have access, where necessary, to appropriate facilities and support personnel in order for them to be able to undertake their chosen activities.
- the Commonwealth, State and Territories Disability Agreement to deliver clear and timely policy, funding and service delivery responsibilities and outcomes.
- guaranteed decent incomes, support and services for people with disability and their carers.

Measures

The Australian Greens will:

- strengthen and provide funding for disability advocacy services, community education programs, and the removal of structural barriers to equality of access to education, training and employment.
- remove the punitive assessment and work requirement levels and job capacity assessments introduced in the Welfare to Work Act 2005 whilst ensuring sufficient places for all people seeking training.
- provide meaningful employment and training opportunities which take into account the specific needs of people with disability.
- allow full tax deductibility for any aids, devices, special equipment or services which directly assist people with disability in finding and maintaining employment.
- remove GST and import duty from specialist aids, devices, appliances and services for people with disability.
- enact national standards to protect people with disability, where required, via monitoring, investigative powers and enforcement.
- increase funding for appropriate, including age-appropriate, accommodation and support services for people with disability, including flexible accommodation models.

- provide increased respite care services and facilities, in-home and emergency support, crisis accommodation and a range of supported accommodation options.
 - adequately resource pathways that support school leavers with disability to make the transition from school into meaningful employment, educational and vocational programs or other community-based activities.
 - support access to specialised employment support services for people with disability who choose to enter the workforce.
 - improve access to training, development and personal support to staff working in disability services, and adopt workforce measures to increase the professional mix of staff.
 - improve pay and conditions and career structures for providers of services for people with disabilities.
 - strengthen national disability access standards.
- **ADDE BOARD MEMBER PROFILE:**

Gordon Trott

Hi.

My name is Gordon Trott and I was born on the 2nd of March 1941 which makes me 69. I was raised in the country (Gippsland) until my early teens attending various state schools, Bairnsdale Tech and Prahran Tech, I reached form two and left school on my 14th birthday to work as a office boy, from here I went on to stores position becoming a leading hand until I decided I needed a change of occupation, firstly as a fork lift operator then into the transport industry as a driver, an occupation that would occupy the remainder of my working life, later running my own messenger service out of Frankston.

I have been involved in voluntary work since the mid 60's firstly with the CFA where I was to Serve on and off for over 30years, I was also a member of the Volunteer Emergency Reserve (a part of Civil Defense now SES) for about 8 years.

I am currently involved with Meals on Wheels (every Monday) in the kitchen and so far have completed 14 years with them.

My other major commitment is the work I do as a volunteer with the Frankston City Council in particular as a member of the "D.A.I.C committee which aims to bring to councils notice any access problems in the council's area. Some of the things that I have been involved with are the Kerb Side Trading scheme, The Key Street Disabled toilet block (a first in Victoria) Pedestrian railway crossing on Beach Street and the Recharge scheme that is still in the process of being installed, and now with the A.D.D.E.

I suffer from COD which requires me to use a mobility device (scooter) to get around; having scoot has enabled me to travel thru many parts of Australia.

One of the things that have come to my attention on my many trips is how difficult it is to access many buildings/area's and because of this restricts many persons from finding employment that would not only help their finances but boost their self esteem.

Many companies are not prepared to employ people with a disability because (I believe) the problems that **they see** with the changes that may-be needed to enable them to take on this person, but with the proper advice and training it is I believe possible to make these changes with little or no disruption to the work site, I also believe that "give a person with a disability a job with fair conditions and you will have a loyal employee for life".