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Media Release: Disability IS an election issue – groups launch campaign calling for whole of government push

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On the eve of next Tuesday's ACT Budget, ACT disability organisations are asking the Government along with candidates in the coming ACT election to focus on key priorities across health, housing, education, gendered violence, families and planning as well as calling for a boost for struggling disability advocacy.

Releasing their 2024 combined election priorities, ACT disability bodies said actions were needed to address the findings of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, the implications of the wide-ranging NDIS review and to make good on the ACT Government's promised ACT Disability Strategy and other reforms like the proposed Disability Inclusion Act.

Craig Wallace, Head of Policy for Advocacy for Inclusion said "in the coming election we invite candidates to commit to a whole of government push to improve the lives of Canberrans with disability. With the NDIS review and National Cabinet agreements meaning that the Territory is now committed to building a new support system the reality is that disability IS an election issue.

"The ACT needs to get back in the game of providing non-NDIS supports and ensuring these are sufficient and sustainable. This means getting the new 'foundational support system' right as well as improving access to our health system, growing accessible public, community and private rental housing, addressing poorly designed local suburbs and giving children the chance to thrive in mainstream schools.

"We also need proper funding and support for advocacy in Canberra so people have the representation and advocacy we know are going to be needed across the next term of government"



Kat Reed, CEO of Women with Disabilities ACT said the disability groups “urged candidates to prioritise a package to prevent violence against women and children to include a focus on accessible education and reporting to ensure all children have access to sexual health and consent education.

“We also seek an expansion of accessible crisis services in domestic violence and training for government workers and frontline workers about disability environments.

“In addition we need work to address the overrepresentation of parents with disability in the child and youth protection systems”, Kat Reed said.

Shannon Kolak, Chief Executive Officer of ACT Down Syndrome and Intellectual Disability “urged the Government to deliver an expanded mental health clinic for people with intellectual disability and to ensure children with intellectual disability also had access to appropriate mental health services and supports. People with intellectual disability should have equal access to the ACT health system and should not have to wait longer than other members of the ACT community to access good quality and appropriate mental health care.

“We also need to see a fully realised and meaningful inclusive education strategy with a focus on reducing the workload of teachers by providing additional teaching staff and support people, while investing in universal design and inclusive infrastructure”.

The Chair of the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT Dr Yvonne Luxford said,

“The Mental Health Community Coalition ACT endorses this shared election priorities platform. While not everyone impacted by mental ill health experiences disability, it is important to highlight the intersectionality of people who experience this co-occurrence.”

For more information visit the [AFI ACT Election Hub](#).

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