



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Independence, Self-Determination & Choice

The Greens want a Canberra that is accessible and inclusive

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The ACT Greens believe that all people have a right to independence, self-determination, choice and freedom from discrimination in their lives. We want people with disabilities to be able to participate fully in all aspects of life, and to be able to access facilities and support personnel in order to be able to undertake their chosen activities. People with disabilities should be able to engage in all levels of decision and policy making, and be adequately supported to engage in the justice system.

The ACT Greens believe people with disabilities should have equal access to secure housing; education, training and employment; disability support services that meet service standards; and support to advocate for their own needs both inside and outside the NDIS. While the NDIS is an important shift for the delivery of services to people with disabilities, The Greens want the ACT Government to continue an active role in the inclusion of people with a disability into our community.

> **NDIS and Beyond**

The ACT Greens support the full implementation of the National Disability Strategy, and remain committed to the full rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. However, the NDIS implementation has revealed specific gaps around the provision of collective services for those with a disability; such as advocacy and consumer information services, and other linking and capacity building services.

That's why the ACT Greens will:

- » Support the continuation of a Minister for Disability to progress negotiations with the NDIA and the Federal Government on disability issues, and advocate for additional supports for information, linkages and capacity building (ILC), and to promote the implementation of the National Disability Strategy;
- » Maintain the ACT Disability Expert Panel made up of consumers of disability services to advise on the continued implementation of the NDIS; and

- » Support an ongoing commitment to deliver a whole of government Disability Policy in the ACT through the continuation of disability policy within Government;
- » Implement Disability Impact Statements for Cabinet submissions as part of the triple bottom line reporting framework;
- » Provide an additional \$100,000 per annum for peak disability rights advocacy organisations to undertake policy development and advocacy.

> Implementation of the National Disability Strategy

The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 is being implemented across jurisdictions. In the ACT, the ACT Disability Expert Panel provides advice on implementation, and projects are undertaken by InvolveCBR.

But the ACT Greens know that this work can't happen without funding and that we need to resource projects being run under InvolveCBR to ensure that they are able to meet the strategic priorities of building inclusive and accessible communities, health and wellbeing, jobs and skills development and housing, amongst other things.

Projects that can support improving the access of health facilities for people with disability or building pathways to employment are crucial in meeting the needs of people with disabilities and help fulfil the ACT's commitment to implement that national strategy.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Provide additional funding of \$300,000 to implement the National Disability Strategy through the work of InvolveCBR.

> Access Advisory Committee

Universal access in urban areas enables all people to get where they need to, regardless of their age, gender or ability. It is about ensuring that people can move about the city freely and with independence.

This includes use of the bus and light rail network, as well as other transport services. Those who struggle to get around our city are the people who can offer the best insights into how to make it better.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Invest \$200,000 per annum to establish an Access Advisory Council to provide strategic advice about how to improve our urban spaces and ensure our new developments and transport meet the necessary standards to ensure our city is accessible for people with a disability and who are ageing.

The Access Advisory Council would provide advice to Government about improving access across the city, and on the development of a Universal Design Charter for Canberra.

It would be supported by someone with expertise in the field of disability access as well as representatives of people with a range of disabilities including cognitive, physical and sensory.

> **Disability-Friendly Buses**

Getting around Canberra using public transport can be difficult if you have a disability. Currently approximately 75% of the ACT's buses meet the standards set out in the Disability Discrimination Act. That means that people with disabilities have to plan their days and journeys around the accessibility of buses. The ACT Greens do not think that is acceptable.

The ACT Greens believe that we need to lay out a clear path to all of Canberra's buses being accessible for those with a disability.

The ACT Greens will:

» Commit to 100% of Canberra's buses being DDA compliant by 2020.

> **Disability Justice Strategy**

People with a disability are often more negatively impacted by the justice system when they are a victim of crime, as well when accusations have been made against them.

Their credibility as witnesses can be called into question or they can struggle to convey their version of a situation they have been involved in. This can result in inappropriate, inadequate protection of their rights and lack of access to justice. Equally, people with disabilities who are accused of crimes are disproportionately incarcerated and have an increased likelihood of repeated contact with the criminal justice system.

In some instances, legal decisions around competency do not take supported decision-making processes into account. This can add to the disadvantage experienced by people with disabilities in regards to decisions about their own lives. Decision-making Acts in other jurisdictions have addressed these concerns and should be part of a modern statutory framework to support decision making for people with a disability.

People with disabilities can also be affected by interpersonal/domestic violence while in residential care situations; yet domestic violence law in the ACT doesn't apply to these circumstances.

The ACT Greens will:

» Develop and implement a Disability Justice Strategy that will address the systemic disadvantage that people with disabilities experience in our justice system.

We will work in collaboration with the community sector and with representation across government.

> **Supporting Parents With a Disability**

People with disabilities have the right to be parents. And, supporting them to be the best parents they can be is something that our community should be doing. Yet people with disabilities are often unfairly disadvantaged by the systems that seek to protect children and under supported to be the best parents they can be.

While the new Out of Home Care Strategy speeds up the processes for children to be placed into a stable care environment, safeguards need to be put in place to ensure that children of parents with disabilities are not removed from their families purely because there has been a lack of appropriate disability parenting support. This may include advocacy services or parenting support services, especially in the early years of parenting.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Invest \$185,000 in an independent review of how the child protection system is working for families with parents with disabilities.

> Better Access to Secure Housing

People with disabilities often have less options when it comes to securing housing, whether that be through private rental or sale, or public or community housing. Accessing secure and appropriate housing can be difficult due to the cost of housing or the lack of appropriate, adapted or supported accommodation.

Ultimately, people with disabilities need a range of options to be available to suit their different needs.

The ACT Greens believe that we need to increase both the supply and the affordability of housing to enable people with disabilities to better access secure housing.

The ACT Greens are committed to implementing a range of measures to improve housing affordability and reduce homelessness, including for people with disabilities.

In addition the ACT Greens will:

- » Provide \$50,000 per annum to support professional housing advocacy for people living with a disability;
- » Ensure mainstream housing and homelessness programs are accessible to people with a disability; and
- » Ensure that all accommodation proposals are compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act and have had human rights assessment undertaken.

> Developing a Carer's Strategy

The ACT Greens support the development of a Carer's Strategy and will ensure that the incredible contribution carers make to our community is recognised. We believe that the strategy to focus on the key areas outlined by Carers ACT and will work to ensure that the voices of the community are reflected in government policy and initiatives. We support comprehensive engagement with the carer community in the development of the Carers Strategy to ensure that it is informed by those who would be most affected by it and is based on the lived experience of carers.

An ACT Carers Strategy will provide a better understanding of the issues, and more coordinated and cohesive responses.

It will ensure that carers are supported so that they are able to sustainably provide care, in a way that supports their own mental health and the health of those who they are caring for.

The ACT Greens will:

» Invest \$250,000 into the development of a Carers Strategy.

In the longer term, we need more than a strategy - we need real commitment to adequate resources to support the strategy. That is what the Greens will push for if elected to the Assembly. This will ensure that we truly recognise and value the role of carers in our community.