



A Message from Sandy Montgomery, Greens SA Legislative Council Candidate

My name is Sandy Montgomery and in the coming state election on March 20th I am standing as a Greens Candidate for the Legislative Council (Upper House). I have personal experience of a physical disability and use an electric wheelchair.

As a person who has lived most of my life with a chronic illness and physical disability, I believe that PWDs and their families deserve the same human rights and access to essential services that other citizens rightly take for granted in this country. Their right to live with a decent quality of life that secures a reasonable degree of dignity shouldn't be something that we are still in 2010 struggling for politically. It *is* all about human rights and the notions of equity, inclusion, self determination and empowerment flow from this over-arching idea. Non-disabled people don't need to ask to be tolerated or included. Their inclusion is not predicated on convenience, cost, aesthetics, architecture or the good will of others.

FOR THE GREENS 'IT'S ALL ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS' - Disability is a key issue being highlighted by the Greens this election, and more importantly beyond the election by our representatives in State and Federal Parliaments. Naturally enough, my motivation to become politically involved has been largely driven by my concerns for the conditions under which PWDs, their families and carers, live their lives. I have chosen to stand for the Greens as it is the Party that I believe has the best disability policy and whose core principles align with my values.

The Greens, internationally, nationally and in South Australia, have always had the core pillars of Greens philosophy of: ecological sustainability; social justice; grassroots democracy; peace and non violence. These core ideas embrace the notions of the rights of PWDs and reject the position of charity and welfare which has until recently prevailed. I believe that the discourse is in a process of change but it is not enough to just change the rhetoric. There must be commitment to this philosophy and just as importantly, political will to turn this into action.

In a perfect world there should be PWDs engaged across the entire political process and wide spectrum of political parties however until now, there are huge barriers to this being the case. And when the major parties fail woefully year in year out to address a significant issue adequately, it should be no surprise that single issue parties such as D4D have emerged.

BEING PART OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS - Having the opportunity to be part of the political process means more than just being able to vote once every three years. It means having the opportunity to join and belong to a lobby group and/ or political party, attend meetings and public forums, or even run as a candidate. After all Franklin Delano Roosevelt used a wheelchair and managed to be president of the United States during World War Two.

KNOWING WHAT YOU'RE GETTING - I believe that the Greens have 'picked up the ball' and called for disability and carer issues to be a major issue along with water, education and health. In contrast to a single issue party such as d4d and others, we have policies across the whole gamut of portfolio areas. When people vote Green, they know exactly what they are getting. People know what we stand for, and know that the Greens have worked hard for voluntary euthanasia legislation, which was very nearly passed in the SA Parliament at the end of last year.

Last month, the Greens launched their Disability Election Platform:

Dignity, Rights and Respect for People with Disabilities

The Greens value the diversity in abilities among individuals and the diversity of contributions that people with disabilities make to our society. We are committed to the inclusion, equal status, and recognition of people with disabilities as valued and participating members of our society and will strive to achieve improved overall quality of life for people with disabilities, and their protection from deprivation, hardship and poverty.

The Greens recognise disabilities as including physical, sensory, and cognitive or intellectual impairments, chronic disease and mental illnesses.

The Greens demand an end to discriminatory attitudes and practices at all levels, an end to informational, legal and infrastructure barriers and the pursuit of equalities in the provision of goods and services and ensuring accessible means for people with disabilities to bring complaints of discrimination.

The Greens will work for people with disabilities to be integrally involved in all levels of decision and policy making across society, including the planning of services for people with disabilities and a consequent increased allocations of resources to ensure equal participation.

You can find the full version of the Platform on the Greens SA website – just [click here](#).

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact me at sandy.montgomery2010@sa.greens.org.au, or call me in the Greens State Office on 8212 4888.