Media Alert: Disability Election Forum sparks push on planning, transport and climate change

Embargoed till 12am 2 May 2023

Canberra disability groups are set to release shared priorities on planning, transport and climate change at an online forum tonight being co-hosted with the Inner South Canberra Community Council.

**What**: Election and disability forum

**Where**: Online via zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqcOqsqzwjE9dR0YN22YJJAkxwvZaGcl4H>

**When**: 6.30pm – 8.30pm Thursday 2 May 2024

**Who**: Speakers will include Barbara Bennett, PSM, former Commissioner for the Disability Royal Commission; Graham Downie, award-winning journalist and public transport advocate; David Goodbody, expert in disability employment and education; and Craig Wallace, Advocacy for Inclusion’s Head of Policy

Quotes attributable to Craig Wallace, AFI Head of Policy:

“Ageing means people with disabilities are a growing group of Canberrans yet we live in a time when our access to basic municipal, private and public goods including the urban realm, transport, paths of travel, energy, heating, cooling and accessible products are being challenged.

“Access to the urban realm and transport is increasingly precarious for some people with disabilities in our city. Issues include rapid development, the proliferation of shared zones and e scooters, the growth of ridesharing and unhelpful changes in vehicle design.

“This is why disability groups are releasing our first election platform seeking an integrated and thoughtful approach to social planning for vulnerable Canberrans.

“We call for a new social planning unit to lead with a rolling program of audits and accessibility improvements, small grants for accessibility focused on older areas and support to enable community councils and disability organisations to engage on municipal improvement.

“We also need changes to the wheelchair accessible taxi fleet, a firm timetable for the complete replacement of older Canberra Renault buses, improvements to accessible information and guaranteed funding for community transport. We are also calling for better regulation of ridesharing apps and micromobility devices.

A business case for free public transport should be developed to recognize the considerable contribution of low incomes and poverty to transport disadvantage, especially for people with disability.

“Climate change is also creating precarious and increasingly uncomfortable lives. We seek actions to ensure that government policies for waste reduction, energy transition and climate change meet the needs of people with disabilities. This includes a summit to agree a set of disability focused just transition principles plus a work program to push industry to ensure newer devices and electric vehicles are accessible.

“A heat wave strategy for people with disability and chronic illness would include a program to install reverse cycle air conditioning in the home of every frail and disabled public housing tenant by 2026”.

**Find the shared election platform on Planning, Climate and Transport** here: <https://www.advocacyforinclusion.org/our-services/policy/election-hub/>

The shared platform is issued by Advocacy for Inclusion, Women with Disabilities ACT, Mental Health Community Coalition ACT and ACT Down Syndrome and Intellectual Disability. It’s also endorsed by ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy (ADACAS), the Inner South Canberra Community Council, Living Streets Canberra and the ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS)

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