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Tēnā koe Matt i nga ahuatanga o te wa

Thank you for your invitation to contribute to your quarterly newsletter, *Thinking Differently*.

The Maori Party supports proper recognition of disabled people and their families in the context of whanau ora. We believe that disabled persons have the right to participate in decision-making, be protected by law, and have control of their lives.

1. Under your party, when will ALL teachers be trained in special needs education as party of their training

We supported a review of the funding and contracting model for special needs in schools as we believed that current provision is uneven and inequitable. The government's vision in Success for All – Every School, Every Child is that all New Zealand schools must be inclusive by 2014. Within this, we support the expectation outlined by the New Zealand Teachers Council that special education needs be a core competency of all teacher training programmes.

2. ASD children seem to miss out on funding in both education and health as their needs are not as visible as some others. When will this change?

We know that when we look at respite care for parents of children with autism – what we have been told from parents is that they want a menu for families to mix and match with what suits them best – such as individualised funding options alongside in-home or shared care.

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3. What supports are politicians going to put in place for adults with ASD?

We support Individualised funding and are committed to seeing how we can improve the coordination and access to information for disabled people and their families, including a consumer information booklet.

4. How will your party ensure and maintain the rights of all disabled people (including people with ASD) in the current recessionary environment?

We promote Government working in partnership with whanau to develop a framework for information distribution and flexible support. In this context, the initiatives that Hon Turia has led as Minister of Disability Issues, have reflected the importance of disabled persons determining the best solutions for their life, such as the Circle of Friends; a New Model for Disability Support; and the priority accorded to implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires the Government to establish a framework to promote, protect, and monitor implementation of the convention. Minister Turia established a protection and monitoring role for the Office of the Ombudsmen; a Disability Commissioner in the Human Rights Commission and resourcing the Convention Coalition to monitor rights of disabled people. This included committing \$750,000 to resource a network of disabled person's organisations to monitor disabled people's experience in living their life.

5. Please feel free to outline any other policies relevant to people with ASD and their families.

We are aware that a survey conducted by a coalition of disability organisations in 2010, reported that discriminatory attitudes toward disabled people are the biggest barrier to the equal rights of disabled people in New Zealand. Minister Turia, announced as part of Budget 2010, that Government will invest \$3 million over the next three years to address attitudes and behaviour which limit opportunities for disabled people. We are proud of this investment, as we believe that changing negative attitudes will help reduce discriminatory behaviour and ensure that disabled people can live ordinary lives on an equal basis with others.

Heoi ano



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Whip, Maori Party