



# MEDIA RELEASE

**RUTH FORREST MLC**

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## TITLE

### **INEQUITABLE FUNDING FOR NW DISABILITY SERVICES**

North-West Tasmanians caring for a family member with a disability at risk of losing a vital support service because of an inequity and inconsistency in government funding.

The Family Based Care Association in the North-West, has been seeking to negotiate an equitable and consistent funding arrangement that enables the not-for-profit organisation to cover the costs of providing this essential support to these families.

Independent MLC for Murchison Ruth Forrest has called for equality and consistency in the funding of the disability support services across that State.

“We have a situation on the North West Coast where an organisation providing care and support to families of individuals with a range of disabilities, including severe and profound disabilities, receive significantly less funding than services providing the same services in the North and the South of the State” Ms Forrest stated.

“This has resulted in a valued and much needed service being unable to provide these much needed services within a sustainable funding arrangement.

“It is completely unacceptable that North West families caring for loved ones with the assistance of this organisation are treated as the poor cousins in this area and do not receive the same funding for the same service” Ms Forrest said.

A review undertaken by KPMG confirmed the funding inequity and lack of consistency. KPMG are currently working on a report related to future funding arrangements. Interim funding agreements are in place in all three regions, however, the North West has been offered a fixed rate whilst the Northern and Southern organisations have agreements that provide after hours, weekend and public holiday loadings. These agreements will continue until unit pricing is finalised and this may not occur until late this year or early next year, at least halfway into the financial year.

The North-West organisation has been operating at a loss and has been offered a flat rate of funding by the Department of Health and Human Services as an interim funding measure until unit pricing is finalised, whilst the North and South current interim contracts attract increased rates for after hours and weekend services.

“Whilst this is an interim funding arrangement to fund disability support services until unit pricing is finalised by the Department, it is unacceptable that significant differences exist between the regions during this time, forcing service providers to continue to operate at a loss” Ms Forrest stated.

“As many clients choose to have support provided on the weekends, the current arrangements will result in further budgetary challenges and further highlights the inequity and lack of consistency across the State” Ms Forrest said.

Ms Forrest has been informed by clients of this service that they are concerned about the long term viability of this service, a service they rely on to ensure that they can continue to provide the majority of care to their loved ones, adding to an already stressful situation.

Two parents who have children with severe and profound disabilities and are prepared to speak out are Glenda Scadden, on behalf of her daughter Jessica and Di Spiewak on behalf of her daughter Latisha.

Glenda can be contacted on 0402 154 196 or 6432 2603 and is available today.

Di can be contacted on 0429 405 338 or 6438 1166.

September 17, 2010.

For further information contact Ruth Forrest on 0419 879 524.