



This week's stories from the media

- Labor offers free childcare to lowest income earners
- NDIS participants promised smooth services
- Push for free flu vaccine for kids
- Shorten promises more solar for schools
- Kidney cancer risk for taller heavier children
- Online food resource for teachers

NDIS Promised Smooth Services

The coalition is promising to fix long-term problems with the National Disability Insurance Scheme if re-elected later this month.

Participants would be allocated a single point of contact and people with stable conditions given three-year plans.

There would also be legislated timeframes for major decisions to be made.

Social Services Minister Paul Fletcher outlined the commitments in north Sydney on Thursday.

But questions quickly turned to why the troubled National Disability Insurance Agency's boss has quit less than two years into the job.

Mr Fletcher insisted there were no performance issues surrounding Robert De Luca, who resigned with immediate effect in the middle of the federal election campaign.

An interim chief executive has been appointed to fill the position.

[Read the story](#)

Labor Offers Free Childcare To Lowest Income Earners

Childcare will be free for hundreds of thousands of low-income families under a Labor plan to boost taxpayer-funded subsidies, if elected on May 18.

More than 880,000 families will be an average of \$1200 a year better off per child with Labor planning to spend \$4 billion to further reduce the out-of-pocket costs parents pay for child care.

The latest election sweetener will see almost 372,000 families earning up to \$69,000 a year receive 50 hours a week of free child care by increasing the government subsidy from 85% to 100% of childcare costs.

More than 150,000 families with a combined income of between \$69,000 and \$100,000 will receive a rebate covering 85% of fees, delivering an extra \$27 a week.

The subsidy will gradually taper down to 60% for families earning a combined income of \$174,000, up from a current 50% subsidy.

While families on low and middle incomes will secure more assistance, Labor will keep the current subsidies - introduced in July last year of between 20% and 50% for families earning between \$174,527 and \$351,248 a year.

Under both Labor and the Coalition's package, families on more than \$351,248 will receive no government assistance.

Labor will keep the criteria which requires both parents to work, study or volunteer for at least eight hours a fortnight.

Labor will also keep the Coalition's annual cap which means families earning more than \$185,710 are limited to a \$10,000 -a-year cap on subsidies.

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“...Under both Labor and the Coalition’s package, families on more than \$351,248 will receive no government assistance....”

Push For Free Flu Vaccine For Kids

Immunisation experts are calling for an annual children’s flu vaccine to be considered for inclusion on the national timetable of free jabs for kids, as SA braces for a horror season.

Researchers report that a quarter of young children are now covered by the vaccine, a five-fold increase since state governments, including SA, rolled out separate funding programs last year.

National Centre for Immunisation physician Frank Beard told The Advertiser more must be done to lift the rates of protection.

Dr Beard said one solution could be adding the vaccine to the National Immunisation Program Schedule, the standard timetable of recommended free shots for kids that already includes illnesses like mumps and whooping cough.

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Shorten Promises More Solar For Schools

Up to 4000 Australian schools will get cheap loans to put solar panels on their roofs to save on their power bills under a Labor government.

The \$1 billion pledge will also help schools install batteries to become “virtual power plants”.

“The solar schools program will not only help schools cut their energy costs, but also deliver energy back to the grid – driving down electricity bills for households and businesses,” Shorten said.

“Labor’s plan delivers lower energy costs and acts on climate change to deliver a better deal for the next generation.”

The funding for the cheap loans will come from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation

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Kidney Cancer Risk For Heavier Kids

Heavier and taller children may be more likely to develop kidney cancer as adults, research suggests.

Experts found the biggest risks for children who were a normal weight when they were seven, but who became overweight by the age of 13.

Researchers already know that around a third of kidney cancer cases are preventable, with obesity linked to 24% of cases.

The experts found that in a pair of 13-year-old boys of similar height, where one was 5.9kg heavier, the heaviest boy had a 14% increased risk of kidney cancer.

The same was true for a pair of 13-year-old girls where the heaviest girl was 6.8kg heavier.

[Full Story](#)

School Post

The term 2 edition of SAASSO’s School Post is in school soon!



Online Food Resource For Teachers

Online resources promise to both save teachers preparation time and curb school expenses by doing away with unengaging textbooks.

Including a swag of “virtual excursions” (narrated by farmers), the From Paddock to Plate (FP2P) Schools Program encourages students to develop an understanding of where their food comes from and explore issues such as nutrition, sustainability and even mental health.

The FP2P program covers nine learning areas in the Australian Curriculum, including Food Technology, Home Economics, English, Maths and Science.

The program also encourages students to think about a career in agriculture.

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