

***Media Release***  
***For Immediate Release***  
***Monday 28 February 2011***

**Politicians urged to honour Stronger Together commitment  
NSW State Election 2011**

In the lead up to the NSW State Election on Saturday 26 March, the Executive Director of UnitingCare NSW.ACT, Reverend Harry Herbert, is urging politicians to honour their commitment to Stronger Together, the current Government's disabilities program, which aims to deliver better services for people with disabilities and their families.

UnitingCare NSW.ACT provides services to people with disabilities every day and staff know how difficult it can be to meet the needs of clients under current funding arrangements.

Living with a disability can be challenging, but even more so when scarce resourcing limits choice and freedom about how you live your life.

Mr Herbert said "this is a crucial policy and I strongly urge the next NSW Government not to renege on promises made around it by both the Liberal and Labor parties.

"Under our current funding arrangements, there are challenges around access including resource constraints and in some cases, a lack of services altogether.

"There are thousands of children, young people, families, individuals and older people living with an acquired or developmental disability in NSW who are falling into the resultant cracks in service provision.

Mr Herbert continued and said that it was crucial that promises to expand the scope of services under Stronger Together and increase funding were kept to ensure effective and sustainable networks were established.

“As a State we need to move beyond supporting people with disabilities in crisis situations and instead, look at ways we can empower them to live life to the fullest of their abilities.”

Mr Herbert also said that the organisation was keeping a close eye on a Federal inquiry into the possibility of National Disability Insurance Scheme. If implemented State Governments would receive sustainable and renewable funding for disability services through the introduction of a levy. The NSW Liberal and Labor parties have both given this support.

UnitingCare NSW.ACT has released a broad election issues paper outlining areas the organisation believes should be made a priority by all parties.

It is accompanied by the UnitingCare Burnside’s 20 steps campaign document which sets out the path for achieving safe children, strong families, inclusive communities in a just society.

These two papers both stress the need to honour the commitment to Stronger Together. The importance placed on Stronger Together in these two papers is based on UnitingCare NSW.ACT’s practical experience in the community and has been informed by listening to the people who use our services, by undertaking research and through our partnerships.

To view the papers please visit [www.withoutfearorfavour.org.au/speak\\_out](http://www.withoutfearorfavour.org.au/speak_out)

**END**

**For more information or to arrange an interview with Rev Harry Herbert, Executive Director, UnitingCare NSW.ACT, please contact Ingrid Hoff, Media and Communication Officer, UnitingCare NSW.ACT on 02 9376 1415 or email [ingridh@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:ingridh@nsw.uca.org.au)**