

# Hong Kong to develop 'in line with Law'

Hong Kong should uphold its executive-led political system with the chief executive at its core, as set out in the Basic Law, the nation's top legislator said on Saturday.

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, said that the development and improvement of the Hong Kong special administrative region's political system must also be compatible with this basic principle.

Zhang also stressed that the Hong Kong team of public officers formed in accordance with the Basic Law must be composed of patriots who respect the Chinese nation, wholeheartedly support the motherland's resumption of exercise of its sovereignty over Hong Kong and will not do things that undermine Hong Kong's prosperity and stability.

Zhang made the remarks at a high-ranking symposium in Beijing commemorating the 20th anniversary of the implementation of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

He said Hong Kong must adhere to the comprehensive and precise implementation of the Basic Law—the city's constitutional document that has proved a success since 1997 and has provided a fundamental guarantee for the “one country, two systems” principle to maintain Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability.

Enacted in accordance with China's Constitution, the Basic Law specifies the guidelines of “one country, two systems” and “Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy”.

The power exercised by the special administrative region is “delegated by” but “not separated from” the central government, and under no circumstances should anyone be allowed to challenge the power of the central government in the name of a high degree of autonomy, Zhang added.

He called on Hong Kong to rigorously perform its constitutional duty of safeguarding national security through legislation prescribed in the Basic Law, and stop any behaviors or activities that undermine national unity.

The central government has committed itself to upholding the “one country, two systems” policy and the Basic Law, actively supported development in all fields in Hong Kong and faithfully protected the lawful rights and interests of Hong Kong people, Zhang said.

Hong Kong's Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying, who also attended the symposium, said the “one country, two systems” policy and the Basic Law are “the best constitutional arrangements” for both Hong Kong and the country.

With the combined advantages of “one country, two systems”, Hong Kong can participate in the country’s major development strategies while serving as a “super-connector” between the mainland and the rest of the world, Leung said.

Chairwoman of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong Starry Lee Wai-king urged those from the opposition camp to see the interaction between Hong Kong and the mainland from the positive light of serving the city’s, as well as the country’s, long-term development interests.

Vice-president of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies Lau Siu-kai believed that people’s opinions may vary because of different political affiliations, but loving the country and the city should be the basic consensus among Hong Kong people.

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## **Green Party launches disability manifesto demanding empowerment for d/Deaf and disabled people**



# Green Party

29 May 2017

**\*Jonathan Bartley and Ben Fletcher, first ever Deafblind parliamentary candidate, to highlight struggle against cuts**

**\*Disabled people entitled to basic rights and opportunities being removed by Conservative Government**

The first Deafblind person ever to stand for Parliament in the UK, Ben Fletcher, will join Green Party Co-Leader Jonathan Bartley today (Monday 29 May) at the launch of the Greens’ disability manifesto (1) in Putney, south west London.

Ben, born profoundly Deaf (2) and partially sighted (3), who is standing as the Green Party candidate for Putney, Roehampton and Southfields, said:

“Disabled people are desperately under-represented in public life in Britain.

At a time of deep disillusionment with politics in the UK, it is really important for the MPs elected in 2017 to reflect the diversity of the people they are meant to represent.

“There are over 11 million disabled people in Britain. That’s one in six. And yet many of us are still prevented from participating fully in education, in employment, and in politics because of inflexible, outdated attitudes, needless barriers to access and a general lack of understanding about what disabled people can really achieve if they receive the support they need.”

Jonathan Bartley, who co-leads the Green Party as a job share so he can support his disabled son Samuel, will attack the Government’s record on supporting disabled people and present a bold alternative vision:

“This General Election is about the kind of country we want to live in. Is it the kind of country the Tories tell us we must accept, in which austerity cuts are inflicted on those least able to withstand their impact, including disabled people who already face huge barriers to basic equality?

“The Green Party refuses to accept that the UK, as the fifth largest economy, cannot do better. The Government should focus on removing the real barriers to disabled people finding work, and tackle the widespread prejudice against disabled people rather than fostering it.”

The Green Party’s disability manifesto highlights the daily struggle disabled people continue to face, from their battle to hold on to essential Personal Independence Payments (PIPs), the recent loss of £30 per week for people in the Employment Support Allowance Work Group, and the scrapping of the Independent Living Allowance which enabled disabled people to live autonomous and dignified lives, to the over 40% reduction in the number of d/Deaf, disabled and older people receiving social care due to slashed budgets.

At the heart of the Greens’ disability manifesto is a plan for a community-led Care & Support Service where we will train, support and resource communities to better help each other and the most vulnerable in our society, at the same time saving money by supporting wellbeing and helping communities to identify and meet their needs, alongside councils, the NHS and Government.

Ben Fletcher, 36, who lives in Southfields with his partner Lauren, works as Lead Developer for FT.com at the Financial Times. His first language is British Sign Language (BSL) (4). The Green Party is campaigning for full recognition of BSL as an official language of the UK.

He decided to stand for Parliament despite the closure of the Access to Elected Office Fund (5) by the Conservative government after the last General Election. The fund, which provided financial support to disabled candidates standing for political office, has never been reopened, despite a recommendation to do so by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in September 2015(6).

Fourteen percent of the Green Party’s candidates in this election describe themselves as having a disability.

Ben said:

"I have been able to stand for Parliament thanks to the support of the Green Party, who have shown themselves to be an inclusive, diverse and modern political party. I am proud to represent a party that stands up for what really matters. If elected to Parliament by the people of Putney on 8 June, I look forward to doing the same".

Ends

For more information contact: [press@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:press@greenparty.org.uk) / 0203 691 9401

For a contact on the day call Mike Blakemore 07718 570675

### Notes:

The launch takes place at Church Square, St Mary's Church Putney, Putney Bridge Approach, Putney SW15 2JQ at 10.30am on Monday 29 May.

1. The disability manifesto will be available at 10.30am at <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/green-guarantee/all-manifestos-alternative-formats.html>

2. "Deaf" with a capital 'D' is often used to refer to those people who see themselves as "culturally Deaf", members of a cultural and linguistic minority, who tend to use British Sign Language to communicate and are proud of their Deaf identity. "Deaf" with a lower-case 'd' is often used to refer to people who see their deafness as a medical condition, and who prefer to use speech rather than sign language. They do not tend to see themselves as part of a Deaf community. See: <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/your-hearing/about-deafness-and-hearing-loss/deafness/describing-deafness.aspx>

3. Ben has retinitis pigmentosa (RP), the name given to a group of inherited conditions of the retina that all lead to a gradual progressive reduction in vision. See: <http://www.rpfightingblindness.org.uk/index.php?tln=aboutrp>

4. British Sign Language (BSL) was recognised by the British government as a language in its own right on 18 March 2003. BSL is a separate language from spoken English, with its own vocabulary, grammar and syntax. It is also different from other sign languages around the world (eg American Sign Language). See: <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030318/wmstext/30318m02.htm>

5. The Guardian, 25 Jan 2016. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jan/25/government-urged-restore-fund-disabled-election-candidates>

6. Equality and Human Rights Commission response to the UN Special Rapporteur on Disabilities' inquiry into the right of disabled people to participate in political and public life, September 2015. See: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/file/4661/download?token=PIl5W6zL>

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## [Speech at the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum and 25th Anniversary of the Mabo Decision Luncheon](#)

### **PRIME MINISTER:**

I acknowledge that we are here on the land of the Wurundjeri people whose country extends to the north of the Birrarung, and the Boonwurrung people whose country extends to the south.

I pay my deepest respects to them, and their elders past and present.

And I acknowledge the campaigners of the 1967 Referendum, including here today Uncle Syd Jackson and Mr Jason Oakley, and the plaintiffs in the great Mabo litigation, whose 25th anniversary we are commemorating this week as well.

I'm joined by my Parliamentary colleagues Nigel Scullion, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Ken Wyatt MP, the Minister for Indigenous Health. Ken has actually just left us and said he's got to go and meet with the AMA – but I think it'd be more entertaining here.

It is good to be joined by Bill Shorten, the Leader of the Opposition.

And of course, the AFL – thank you for the extraordinary leadership you show. 700 AFL players, Richard, I was told a moment ago, Richard and Gill – 82 Indigenous players out of 700. What a great achievement.

Tanya, thank you for your great speech and your great leadership. Justin Mohamed – CEO, Reconciliation Australia and Tom Calma – Co Chair. And so many dear friends and distinguished guests.

I want to thank for the Welcome to Country – Aunty Zeta and Aunty Carolyne. Thank you so much for welcoming us to your country.

And Aunty Pam – great speech and deadly shoes. Fantastic! So good.

And what an amazing performance from the Torres Strait, from the Eip Karem Beizam group, and of course the dancers and the singers, Shellie Morris and Dhapanbal Yunupingu. This is a great occasion.

Thank you all for joining us here today to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of

the 1967 Referendum, the 25th anniversary of the Mabo decision, and the start of National Reconciliation Week 2017.

On this day exactly fifty years ago, millions of Australians had their names marked off on the electoral roll, stepped into a polling booth, just minutes later walked out, and united made history.

Their overwhelming support at the Referendum expanded Commonwealth powers to make laws relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and enabled all First Australians, who had always been here, as Chicka Dixon just reminded us to be counted as part of the official population.

1967 was a crucial point in Australia's reconciliation journey, where we consciously moved from exclusion to inclusion, from injustice and pain, towards healing, and where we recognised we were greater united than divided.

For our First Australians had not been treated with the respect they deserved, with the respect you deserved, with laws and regulations controlling, limiting and diminishing your lives.

Generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a number of whom are here today, who were removed from their families and communities because of the colour of their skin. We acknowledge that this removal separated children from their families, their lands, languages and cultures – cared for by their ancestors for more than 50,000 years.

Indigenous Diggers, returning from war having defended our freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, were denied the full rights of citizenship for which they had so bravely fought.

For our nation's birth certificate, the Constitution, had declared a Federation from six separate colonies, but had excluded our First Australians – the very people who have cared for this land from time out of mind.

But to describe '67 as a sudden awakening of our nation to these injustices, minimizes the sacrifices of those families who had survived since European arrival and then contributed year upon year into seeking equality of opportunity.

This is a story of resilience. It is a story of survival. It is a story of persistence and courage.

Every step of the journey to 1967 was built on the last.

It was a campaign that took decades of relentless agitation and advocacy, setbacks and sacrifice, courage and resilience.

So in 2017 we stand on the shoulders of those giants.

And we are honoured to be joined here by some of the '67 campaigners and Mabo plaintiffs and their families.

They too stood on the shoulders of the giants that came before them.

In 1925 Worimi Fred Maynard established the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association with the slogan "One God, One People, One Destiny".

In 1938, Yorta Yorta man William Cooper, Bill Ferguson and Jack Patten organised the 'Day of Mourning' on Australia Day, as well as the indefatigable Margaret Tucker.

There were giants like Bill Onus, and Ngemba woman Pearl Gibbs.

With each step building on the last, Pastor Doug Nicholls succeeded Cooper as head of the Australian Aborigines League.

After a great career of football and politics Doug was the first Aboriginal person to be knighted, despite having been excluded from the change rooms by his team mates simply because of his Aboriginality.

It is fitting the Sir Doug Nicholls Round will be played at the 'G' today, to recognise, as we do every year, his contribution to football and the spirit of reconciliation which he embodied.

Here in Victoria, the roots of the referendum movement trace right back to the early 19th century, when activists William Barak and Simon Wonga, led the Kulin nation in their struggle for their land and their culture.

So many champions over so many years – each stream building into the river wide enough to embrace a nation and change its constitution.

Jessie Street, Bert Groves, Joyce Clague, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Chicka Dixon, Dulcie Flower, Shirley Peisley, Pastor Frank Roberts, Laurie Moffatt, Joe McGuinness.

The Freedom Riders, led by the young Charles Perkins.

Too many to name, these are just a few – but we honour them all today.

On a Monday night in May 1957, thousands of Sydneysiders converged on the Town Hall to watch a documentary that laid bare the harsh reality of life for remote Indigenous communities. It revealed a nation divided.

This was the night Faith Bandler and Pearl Gibbs launched their petition to demand a better deal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Their campaign began with a couple of thousand signatures and ended just over 10 years later with 90.77 per cent of the population voting 'yes' for change.

The campaigners had an unswerving belief that every step would move us closer together as Australians.

So to everyone who, over decades, worked with and for the groups that built and grew the case for the referendum, today we say again thank you.

For the many hundreds of thousands of First Australians who felt the ground

beneath them shift that day, who felt their horizons open up and their status as citizens at long last enshrine the rights it should – the 27th of May 1967 remains the turning point.

And it's why this week I announced a \$138 million education package to further enable the economic and social inclusion for which the '67 campaigners fought and for which our government is committed to continue and develop and grow. Every element of our policy is focused on that economic empowerment, the foundation of which as we know, and Syd and I were just discussing this a moment ago, is education.

'67 saw Australians come together in a moment of national unity to properly acknowledge the identity, the culture, the history, the citizenship of our First Australians.

This week we also celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the High Court's decision to uphold native title rights in the hard-won Mabo case.

The five plaintiffs were fighters for their spiritual and cultural survival – Eddie Mabo, Father Dave Passi, Sam Passi, James Rice and Celuia Mapo Salee.

Each step was built on the last, and importantly, because of the '67 change, the Commonwealth could create, could enact the Native Title Act.

Today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights and interests in the land have been formally recognised in over 40 per cent of Australia's land mass.

The number of determinations under the Native Title Act now outweighs the number of claims currently registered.

Now, this week has seen us look towards another step, with the Referendum Council's National Convention at Uluru.

As I know better than most, changing the Australian Constitution is not easy. 44 referendums, only 8 successes.

The last remotely controversial amendment to be approved was in 1946.

Indeed, history would indicate that to succeed not only must there be overwhelming support, but minimal, or at least tepid, opposition.

Fundamental to our Constitution is the supremacy of Parliament underneath the Constitution.

Our laws are made by the House of Representatives and the Senate – each democratically elected, with each member and senator representing both their constituency and above all their nation.

The campaigners of 67's success inspired Neville Bonner to join the Liberal Party and run for Parliament.



He brought his voice to the Senate in 1971 and now there are five First Australians in our Parliament including the first Aboriginal Minister – Ken Wyatt who was the first Aboriginal man to serve in the House of Representatives and across the aisle Linda Burney the first Aboriginal woman so to serve in the House of Representatives. And of course in the Senate Pat Dodson, Malarndirri McCarthy and Jacqui Lambie

We thank the delegates at Uluru for their work which will now be considered by the Referendum Council which will in turn advise the Opposition Leader and myself and through us the Parliament.

It is the Parliament's duty, and its alone, to propose changes to the Constitution.

But the Constitution cannot be changed by Parliament – only the Australian people can do that.

No political deal, no cross party compromise, no leaders' handshake can deliver constitutional change.

To do that a constitutionally conservative nation must be persuaded that the proposed amendments respect the fundamental values of the Constitution and will deliver precise changes, clearly understood, that benefit all Australians.

A Referendum will demand politicians to lead, and we will, but a successful campaign for Constitutional Recognition must ask Australians to acknowledge the humanity of their neighbour – their fellow Australian – and harness support for the proposal with as much resolute solidarity and unity as the campaigners of '67 did 50 years ago.

Today I believe all Australians acknowledge what we know is true – that prior to European settlement our First Australians spoke hundreds of languages, cared for this country, your song lines crossed the entire nation, your languages carried sacred knowledge, your stories of creation were passed on from generation to generation, and when Aboriginal people lost those songs, those languages, that knowledge, we all lost. We all lost.

But we also acknowledge that despite so much loss, much was saved and you are, we are restoring and recovering languages and cultures, and in doing so, reuniting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and all Australians, with the most ancient human cultures on earth.

Your contribution is not static or frozen in time and we've been reminded of that today. It is sewn into the fabric of our modern society and our modern economy, and as Prime Minister I will continue to acknowledge and do all I can to ensure that being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander means to be successful, to achieve, to have big dreams and high hopes, and to draw strength from your identity as an Indigenous person in this great country.

Charles Perkins said that 'If he wouldn't have done it, others would have.' Perhaps he was right. But to those who have championed rights and equality for First Australians over our history, and those who continue that work

today, you have never taken progress for granted and for that we thank you.

Your culture, our culture, is old and new, as dynamic as it is connected – on the highest tree top the new flower of the morning draws its being from deep and ancient roots.

Now it is up to us, together and united, to draw from the wisdom and the example of those we honour today and so inspired bring new heights and brighter blooms to that tree of reconciliation which protects and enriches us all.

Thank you very much.

[ENDS]

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## Remarks at the Australian Medical Association National Conference

### **PRIME MINISTER:**

Thank you very much Michael for that very warm welcome.

Michael Gannon, President. Tony Bartone, Vice President. Anne Trimmer, Secretary General. The AMA Federal Council, past presidents, state AMA delegates, Australian Medical Students Association, friends one and all – it is great to be with you.

And to be so at a time of growing collaboration between the government and the AMA.

The work you do is so important. You are the healthcare professionals to whom Australians turn in their moments of greatest need. You treat us from the time we're born, and through every stage of life. You are doctors, counsellors, friends and you always provide a reassuring, trusted voice.

Meeting your Federal Council last year helped me hear first hand from you the first hand prospective of the medical profession.

In President Michael Gannon, you have a leader who engages in policy discussions with government with real candour – he is a plain, blunt man and very good. Very good to know, you always know what his position is – no ambiguity – and he has a willingness to work with the government.

We won't always agree, but it's very important to have an open door for discussions on health and my government always will.

Now, as Michael said, this year's budget has restored the sense of goodwill

between the AMA and the government because it reaffirms our commitment to health.

Ensuring that the budget is on a sustainable footing enables us to maintain our world class, universal healthcare system – one that puts patients at its very heart.

Health care is costing us much more as our population ages. And while new technologies, and drugs help us live longer, better lives, it is also expensive to stay at the very forefront, at the cutting edge in every respect, putting further pressure on the health budget. That's why it is critical that we spend each dollar wisely.

I am determined to ensure that we maintain our world-class health system, now and in the future, and that our policies are fully funded.

We are increasing funding every year into Medicare, the PBS, public hospitals and private health insurance. At the same time we have delivered a fair and responsible budget, that contains growth in expenditure, and returns the budget to balance so that we can pay for the healthcare system Australians need.

We are making sure that the money we invest in health is targeted and efficient.

And we must ensure, as far as possible, that healthcare – Medicare in particular – is quarantined from baseless cynical political attacks.

Patients must have confidence in their healthcare system.

Funding for Medicare will now be guaranteed by an Act of Parliament and the money will be there for all to see.

Dedicated funding for Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme will be placed in a Medicare Guarantee Fund every year—transparently, assuredly, and responsibly.

It's all part of my determination to give you – the professionals we rely on – the resources and backing that you expect and deserve.

The Minister for Health and I appreciated your feedback and the very collaborative approach in the lead up to the budget.

We have listened and acted, lifting the freeze on MBS indexation.

Our approach to lifting the freeze is responsible and targets those services that matter to Australians the most.

We have also decided not to proceed with 2014 Budget savings measures as well as changes to bulk billing incentives for diagnostic imaging and pathology services.

Our staged set of changes deliver on our commitments to guarantee Medicare

and cement the critical role that primary care plays on our health system.

The doctors and medical professionals of Australia can expect a considered and calm approach to policy from my government. There'll be no sudden changes, no knee jerk reactions, only clear, consistent decision making in consultation with you, that helps you deliver first class services to Australian patients.

The States' hospital funding will grow by around \$4.2 billion or 22.8 per cent over the next four years. The current 3-year funding agreement is underway and for the first time patient quality and safety has been linked to the funding.

The government also values the role private health insurance plays in our health system and the Minister for Health is exploring sensible opportunities for reform of private health insurance to ensure its value for Australians and long-term sustainability.

We are trialling significant reforms in primary care, as you know. Our Health Care Homes model supports people with chronic illness and focuses on coordinated care, with flexibility for the GP team to look at new ways to deliver that care. The focus is firmly on the patient, enabling them to stay as well as possible at home and out of hospital.

And when we launched our policy I met a patient named Michael who sadly has now lost his fight with cancer – and I will always remember his words – “Every day I am not in hospital is a great day”.

This is a model that healthcare professionals have been calling out for, for years. We have listened to your concerns and we are determined to ensure that the right system is in place that supports both practitioners and patients.

We will continue to prioritise mental health – this is a very, very important focus for my government.

Professor Ian Hickie from whom I have learnt a great deal on the subject as I'm sure many of you have, speaks of the mental wealth of nations. It is a very apt phrase – because it reminds us that we all have a vested interest in each other's mental health, as indeed we have a vested interest in each other's health. But mental health comes at such a great cost, not only to the person suffering, but also to their family, communities and of course the health care system. And it has been in large part overlooked for a long time, for a whole range of reasons of stigma that you understand very well.

Nearly half of all Australians experience a mental health issue over the course of their lives, and it doesn't discriminate. I heard you had a session today on the health and wellbeing of your profession. That is so important. I am a very big supporter of the R U OK Campaign – just three simple words, which can mean so much to a person who needs help. There is a lot of help to be found in empathy and awareness.

We are also trialling innovative ways to support people, including investing in digital trials which will put 24/7 support in the hands of those who need

it. And we will be doing more to care for the carers. We're also investing in regional suicide prevention trial sites, to ensure that those who live outside of our capital cities are supported.

In the work that you do, for which we thank you, there is great hope and promise which could benefit all Australians.

Now the Health Minister Greg Hunt and I are determined to continue our strong track record of investing in medical research and technology.

While we're a world leader in health and medical research, the challenge in Australia has always been getting the research out of the laboratory and into the marketplace.

The Medical Research Future Fund and the Biomedical Translation Fund will provide around \$1.4 billion over the next five years to support our medical researchers and scientists, including through commercialisation.

The first disbursements of \$65.9 million from our Medical Research Future Fund were announced in the Budget. They included \$5 million to support the internationally recognised Advanced Health Research and Translation Centres, and \$10 million in grants for preventive health research.

We have also put in place a Biomedical Translation Fund of more than \$500 million—\$250 million of Commonwealth funding matched by private sector investors.

The Biomedical Translation Fund is one of the National Innovation and Science Agenda's most important initiatives. As a key vehicle for commercialising our world-class medical research, it will provide new jobs and export opportunities. And of course it improves the health and wellbeing for Australians and people all around the world.

Today we make the Fund a reality, and I'm pleased to announce the first investment. It has the potential to benefit the people who deserve the highest level of support – our children.

We will provide \$10 million for a promising new treatment for peanut allergies in children.

The research by Prota Therapeutics will help develop a new therapy to allow children with peanut allergies to incorporate peanut products as a regular part of their diet.

And what a difference that would make to children everywhere. It's an example of the innovative projects the Government is backing – projects that are built on the excellent medical research and technology that you at the AMA foster and encourage.

And research is an issue as you know that governments must focus on not simply with great scientists and researchers, medical professionals, but also with patients and their families.

I've just left a meeting with Greg Hunt who sends his apologies – I know he spoke to you eloquently yesterday – but Greg and I have just been meeting with the father of a young lady who is suffering from brain cancer and discussing his ideas and his friends' ideas about how we can do more to promote research into brain cancer and increase the survival rate for brain cancer sufferers. And particularly focus on brain cancer in children – as you know, it has one of the most deadly consequences and incidences.

This is a leadership role in health that falls on government, that needs to bring to bear all of the elements – responsible financial stewardship ensuring that we invest for the future into the research. Ensuring that we maintain and guarantee and reinsure those vital medical services that we all depend on – Medicare, PBS, our hospital system, private health insurance – but it also needs a very, very big heart and I know that all of you with all of your years of academic training, all of your years of clinical experience, all of the science and the study that has dominated your lives, above all else, what drives you is love for your fellow men and women, love for your patients. You've committed yourselves to a life of service – undiluted, a commitment of compassion and we thank you for it.

Our health system is the envy of the world.

Our skilled doctors, our nurses, all your allied health professionals work tirelessly to give the best possible care and your government thanks you for that.

Thank you for your dedication. Thank you for your professionalism. Thank you for your compassion. We will match you with a commitment to ensure that you have the resources at every level to continue to deliver the practical love that keeps Australians well.

Thank you very much.

**[ENDS]**

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## **10 Questions Theresa May must answer on the dementia tax**

Today, we have challenged Theresa May to answer ten pressing questions on the Dementia Tax and to come clean and give the voters the facts before the election takes place.

It is simply not good enough to dodge difficult questions and proper scrutiny during the campaign over an issue that will have such a huge impact over people's lives.

Under Theresa May's proposals, many would end up paying far more for their care.

Families deserve to know now what the Dementia Tax will mean for their homes, finances and relatives.

We have set out a clear set of questions Theresa May must answer in order to come clean to the British public and address their concerns.

The Liberal Democrats will keep campaigning to scrap the Dementia Tax and ensure no-one has to worry about catastrophic costs to pay for their care.

## **10 Questions Theresa May must answer on Dementia Tax**

### **1. At what level will the cap on care costs be set?**

Just this morning Amber Rudd said that there would be a cap -but that she didn't know at what level it would be set. That contradicted both Theresa May and the Conservative manifesto. It's time for Theresa May to come clean – at what level will the cap on care costs be set?

### **2. How will it be uprated?**

Will it be in line with house prices? Inflation? Some other measure? The British people deserve to know.

### **3. Who does the £100,000 floor apply to?**

Does the £100,000 floor just apply to households? Or does it also apply to individuals?

### **4. Will the cap and £100,000 floor apply to care costs only?**

Does the cap just apply to care costs or will it also include accommodation costs? Theresa May must come clean.

### **5. Will people need to pay an arrangement fee and interest?**

Will people have to pay arrangement fees and interest on Deferred Payment Agreements for care costs, and if they do how will these charges be set?

The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) currently charges 2.25% interest and a £900 set up fee plus £300 a year (read more [here](#)).

### **6. Will interest fees and fee payments for care costs be included under the cap?**

Because if they aren't – vulnerable elderly people could be hit with massive fees and charges, even after they sell their home.

**7. Will local councils have to pay the additional costs for this scheme or will they be fully reimbursed by the Treasury?**

If councils do have to pay additional costs that'll be another drain on already stretched council budgets and cause even more cuts.

**8. Will widows, widowers or dependent children be able to remain in the family home after their relative has died?**

Forcing widows, widowers and dependent children to leave their homes after losing a relative – especially where they are elderly themselves would be an absolute disgrace. So would they be forced to sell the home to pay for care costs.

Theresa May must come clean on what her dementia tax will mean for the families of those affected.

**9. What interest rate will be charged on a deferred payment once the beneficiary has died?**

The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead charge 8% if not settled within 90 days of death – will the charge be similar? Higher? Lower?

**10. Will measures be put place to prevent people avoiding the Dementia Tax, for example by releasing equity or gifting a house to children or grandchildren more than seven years before their death?**

The Liberal Democrats have committed in their manifesto to implementing the recommendations of the Dilnot Commission, which would mean a cap on care costs of £72,000