




Speech By
Sandy Bolton

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2019

DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (NDIS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (3.58 pm): I rise to speak on the Disability Services and Other Legislation (NDIS) Amendment Bill 2019 which reflects the changing roles and responsibilities of the National Disability Insurance Agency, NDIA, the National Disability Insurance Scheme commission and the Queensland government once Queensland becomes a participating jurisdiction of the scheme from 1 July 2019. The amendments provide clarity on the Queensland government's reduced role in funding disability services at full scheme and its retention of a limited amount of quality assurance and safeguard functions for registered NDIS providers.

The bill has been well supported by the front liners, including service providers, advocacy groups, disability networks and statutory authorities. That support extended to the continuation of the current safeguards for worker screening under the yellow and blue card systems, and the expansion of the exclusion of persons qualified to hold a yellow card. Within the additional amendments presented, it is positive to see that offences including manslaughter have been added to the serious offences and the elevation of current serious offences to new disqualifying offences, with a transition and new framework to accommodate those.

As we have heard, Queensland will retain its framework in relation to the authorisation of restrictive practices designed to safeguard the rights of people with an intellectual or cognitive disability who have challenging behaviour and ensure that the use of restrictive practices are appropriately regulated and monitored, with a view to eliminating and reducing their use. It is also good to see that the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors has commenced work with other states and territories, the Department of Social Services and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to develop nationally consistent minimum standards for behaviour support.

Submitters have raised concerns about the narrowing of the definitions of 'death in care' and 'visitable site' for all people receiving supports under the NDIS in Queensland. It is important to have the flexibility to change a definition if it proves unworkable in practice into the future.

While the role of the Queensland government in funding disability supports will be reduced with the implementation of the NDIS, the concerns of disability service providers and the difficulties they face in accessing funds for operational service provision need to be acknowledged and monitored. From what has been experienced within my own electorate, evidenced by daily calls on numerous shortfalls from parents and carers, we must also acknowledge that, as much as the NDIS seeks to improve the lives of participants, there are unresolved issues. These include the capacity for community organisations and sporting bodies to accommodate special needs; the costs involved for disability providers for audits, infrastructure and transport that are not factored into the support rates or plans; and, ultimately, the potential loss to participants should our organisations falter. For many years that has meant family for many, and if it is lost will be one of the greatest failings of the scheme.

As mentioned by the member for Mount Ommaney, we thank the minister for responding to our concerns regarding the Taxi Subsidy Scheme, with the government making provision for funding for the next 12 months. However, I query what will happen when that ends.

My sincere thanks are extended to Queensland's all-abilities service providers and their volunteers for their tireless work and advocacy on behalf of the people within their care and their families. This has been the most difficult of transitions and their resilience, commitment and ongoing fundraising to deliver the very best to our all-abilities sector is inspirational. My thanks go to the committee and departments for their hard work and to the submitters for their efforts to deliver the best outcomes through these amendments. I support this bill and commend it to the House.