



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard 22 October 1998

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee D

Report

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (11.43 a.m.): I rise to support the report of Estimates Committee D. I wish to commend the work done by that committee, especially the behind-the-scenes work. Recognition of these dedicated, committed and, dare I say, tireless workers is very necessary. The Minister for Women's Policy has demonstrated a genuine commitment to supporting Queensland women wherever they live. The addressing of the high level of domestic violence that exists in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is demonstrated in the Minister's commitment to social justice issues and her awareness of the need for programs to be culturally relevant.

The Department of Families, Youth and Community Care provides and supports a diverse range of services for children, young people, people with a disability, older people and families. The department works with other organisations and communities to ensure the ongoing development of community networks and the delivery of services that are responsive to people's needs. I acknowledge that the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care is responsible for the development of services for people who have a disability. Some of those services include the provision of a range of direct and funded accommodation and lifestyle support. I congratulate the department on its budgeted support that will be provided to people with an intellectual disability or complex support needs. Funding is provided to further address the high levels of unmet need in the disability sector. Those funds will be used to provide accommodation and support services to individuals and families, ensure equitable access to disability services for disadvantaged groups and commence the piloting of local area coordination.

Those improvements that support and assist people with disabilities are very welcome in my electorate. Today I would like to pay respect and homage to an incredible human being in my electorate, Mr Vincent Morelli. He is 28 years old. Three years ago he was involved in a diving accident that left him with quadriplegia. Prior to his accident, Mr Morelli was an active and productive member of society; now he is mostly bedridden, wheelchair bound and is unable to perform simple tasks such as feed himself, dress himself, get out of bed or answer the telephone without assistance. Vince is now totally reliant on carers for everyday support. His quadriplegia has left him with biceps but no triceps, so he can raise his arms to a certain height but he is unable to put his arms down again. He cannot grasp anything. He has no sensation in his upper body and requires postural support to be able to sit. It is almost impossible to imagine what it must be like to go from being an active member of the community to becoming reliant on everybody for everything. These limits and restrictions must take their toll.

I had the opportunity to meet with Vince and get to know him a little. What I discovered was human nature at its best. Vince is an accepting, caring and loving person whose attitude to life leaves one feeling humble and indeed in awe. Despite the physical hardship and emotional upheaval that the accident would have caused, Vince has a wicked sense of humour and wonderful outlook on life. To meet him is truly an experience. He lives within the community in a private rental property that has been modified for wheelchairs. In the community, he is supported by two carers on carer payments from Centrelink. One carer supplies support at night. During the weekend he is supported with two hours on Saturday and two hours on Sunday by HAAC. The difficulty is that carers require respite and time off

each week. Without the flexibility of having his own finance to arrange carer hours, Vincent is continually struggling to juggle carer hours and his personal care needs. He has been left in the position of being in bed for three hours urgently requiring assistance but was unable to contact anyone. Vince requires recurrent funding for 35 hours per week.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank not only Vince for allowing me to visit but also the Queensland Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of Queensland for inviting me to meet with them. They are a wonderful and hardworking association and deserve lots of praise for the work that they do. I will be actively campaigning towards improving Vince's lot and giving him the opportunity to live a better life and become a productive member of our community. It is with pride that I work in the Beattie Government. I once again congratulate the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care on her very fair, supportive and positive budget.
