



Speech by

LINDY NELSON-CARR

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard 10 November 1999

ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER; ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (11.06 p.m.): Tonight, I rise to address a very alarming matter that is affecting my electorate. This is the very concerning issue of attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which over the past few years has gathered momentum. Large numbers of children are being diagnosed with ADD and schools and counsellors are learning to manage the behaviour of these children. As a former teacher and guidance officer and, indeed, as a mother, I understand the enormous pressures that we face through having children in our care. However, for those people who have the added burden of coping with children diagnosed with ADD, the daily crises seem insurmountable.

Parents in particular who cannot cope any more with the dangerous and often psychotic behaviour of their loved ones are desperate and no answers are forthcoming. Many parents have welcomed this Government's Positive Parenting Program to assist them in raising children who have difficult behaviours. Parents of children who have ADD and ADHD face complex issues and have varied needs frequently requiring differing programs and strategies to assist them. The burdens placed on the education, child health and welfare systems in Townsville alone are overwhelming. Although Education Queensland recognises ADD as a medical condition and makes provision to meet the educational needs of children diagnosed with ADD, with or without hyperactivity, all the other departments still have a long way to go to address the issues confronting these people.

As we approach the 21st century, the needs of individuals and families affected by ADD cannot be ignored as the cost to the individual, the family and society as a whole is too high. Individuals and families affected by ADD need well-informed and responsive medical services, a flexible education system and family support such as respite and case management similar to those supports that are offered to children who suffer from autism. In Queensland, a number of support groups are advocating for changes within Government policy and service provision so that families and individuals have the support that they need to contribute in a meaningful way to the community in which they live. They are encouraging the community to work with them, not against them, so that the best outcome can be achieved for individuals and families affected by ADD and ADHD. A preference for interdepartmental liaison with an interdepartmental working group is critical if we are to address this very alarming condition that affects such a large section of our community.
