



Speech by

**JO-ANN MILLER**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Hansard 10 May 2002

**RESIDENTIAL SERVICES [ACCREDITATION] BILL**

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (10.54 a.m.): The Residential Services (Accreditation) Bill 2002 was developed by the hostel industry task force and other groups as a direct response to the poor conditions and poor standards in the industry. The bill has three principal objectives: to protect the health and safety of residents and ensure residents' basic freedoms; to encourage providers to improve the way they conduct residential services; and to support fair trading in the industry.

Some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community are residents living in these hostels. They are often on disability pensions, age pensions or other limited income. They often have psychiatric illnesses or an intellectual or physical disability. Some have serious drug problems. Some are alcoholics. Some residents are simply old people who have been shunned by their families yet are not old enough or indeed sick enough to enter a nursing home facility. All these people have the potential to be socially isolated from their family and friends and from the community at large. Just because people have these problems in their daily lives it does not mean that they have to live in poor conditions, that they have to live in second-class conditions or even no class conditions. At present, many residents live in shockingly poor conditions. They have little protection of their rights and, worse still, are open to abuse, neglect and exploitation. Thank God we have a Labor government in Queensland, because such conditions will not be tolerated once this bill is passed and the staged implementation of this bill is completed. It is only Labor governments that look after the poor and disadvantaged. It is only Labor governments that care, and it is only Labor governments that can deliver such socially important reform legislation.

**Mrs Rose:** Basic rights.

**Mrs MILLER:** That's true. The bill will establish minimum standards and living conditions for residents in hostels, boarding houses and age pension and rental complexes. There will be a mandatory accreditation scheme administered by the government. The highest risk premises will be targeted first in the staged implementation process to avoid the risk of closures and potential homelessness of residents. In simple terms, a residential service operator will not be able to conduct such a service without being registered first and accredited to the required level of service.

The first part of the process is registration. Minimum standards will have to be complied with, including building standards, fire standards and the suitability of persons involved in the management of the service. The next part is the application for accreditation. This scheme will ensure that the service complies with industry standards that will be set out in subordinate legislation. The providers will be required to undergo an external assessment by an audit team, but at all times they will be encouraged to continually improve the quality of their service. All residential services will have to be accredited at level 1. Level 2 accreditation will include those services that provide food to residences. Level 3 accreditation includes those services providing a personal care service to residents.

One of the most important aspects of the bill relates to protecting people making a complaint. This will ensure that a resident is not asked to leave a facility simply because a complaint has been lodged or for that person to be adversely affected because they made a complaint. I congratulate the minister on her work on this bill and also the industry associations for their contributions. Minister, this is great Labor legislation for the poor and disadvantaged, and it is one reason why I feel so proud to be a Labor member of this House. I commend the bill to the House.