



Speech by

Hon. JUDY SPENCE

MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Disability Services Queensland

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors) (10.05 a.m.): As Minister for Disability Services, I am extremely proud of this government's commitment to the disability sector. We have injected an additional \$290.5 million in state funding over the next four years and Future Directions for Disability Services, released with this year's budget, details the allocation of this funding and a program of reform for the disability sector.

It was with pleasure last week that I delivered on one of the key reform initiatives outlined in Future Directions—a new business model for DSQ. The improved business model will place the department in a better position to strengthen and refine its programs and services. This new business model will see the establishment of five directorates—policy, programs, community and specialist services, accommodation support and respite services, and corporate and executive services. For the first time DSQ will have separate directorates to carry out the roles of policy development and purchaser and provider of disability services. This separation of roles will ensure fairness and transparency in the distribution of disability funding.

DSQ staff have been briefed about the new business model, as have key sector stakeholders and union representatives. The implementation of this new business model will occur within existing resources and is consistent with the government's employment security policy. Information about the changes is available from the department and on the Internet. I encourage people to read this information and provide feedback to DSQ by the end of January. I am confident that the changes proposed to the DSQ business model will place the department in a better position to implement the outcomes of the consultation paper to be released next year around assessment, prioritisation, funding and service approaches. The changes to be implemented under the new business model will help to strengthen safeguards for protecting people with a disability from abuse and neglect. As well as the intensive program of reform at the state level, for the past two years I have been working with disability ministers from across Australia to develop national reforms to reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect of people with a disability.

In 1999 the former Disability Minister, Anna Bligh, endorsed a national project aimed at improving strategies for preventing abuse. I am pleased to announce that I recently endorsed the public release of the *Abuse prevention strategies in specialist disability services final report*.

The development of a new business model for DSQ was influenced by the recommendations in this report. DSQ already has systems and safeguards in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect including the Preventing and Responding to the Abuse, Assault and Neglect of People with a Disability Policy. However, the new business model will provide greater accountability and clearer lines of reporting and monitoring of services and support to clients.

A complaints, investigation and prevention branch will be established within the corporate and executive services directorate. Locating this branch here will separate it from other operational areas of the department. There will also be a separate directorate responsible for the monitoring and administration of accommodation support and respite services directly provided by the department to people with an intellectual disability.

A new model will also allow the department to put in place more rigorous service agreements with service providers. Under these agreements both direct and non-government services will be

required to implement a quality assurance system, including the reporting of critical incidents where client or staff safety or wellbeing has been placed at risk.

The Beattie government is taking a proactive approach to reforming the disability sector and is working hard to deliver a better deal to Queenslanders with a disability, their families and carers.