



Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Wednesday, 29 March 2006

DISABILITY SERVICES BILL

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.07 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise and participate in debate on the Disability Services Bill 2005. It is very opportune that I have been able to speak in the debate straight after the member for Greenslopes. It was refreshing to hear him speak with enthusiasm about how this government is moving forward with a whole-of-government response to this very difficult and very expensive issue of funding disability services. There is no doubt that there is an amazing growth of need in this section of our community.

On the Sunshine Coast we have the Sunshine Coast Children's Therapy Centre, the Hear and Say Centre and so many other not-for-profit associations that play a very important partnership role with the state and federal governments to try to improve the lot of families with one of their loved ones who suffers some form of disability. It is very refreshing to hear members and this government focusing on trying to improve, where it can, the level of services for people who have a disability.

It is certainly appreciated by my constituents and by the constituents of the greater Sunshine Coast region whom I have contact with that the government is recognising and trying to respond to the great need that we have. Often we hear about the thousands of people moving to the Sunshine Coast. Sometimes we forget that of those thousands of people moving here many may have disabilities. That relocation places additional strain and pressure on our already stretched and under pressure disability services.

Some 12 months ago the minister was able to find time to visit my electorate, part of the Sunshine Coast. We appreciate the opportunity to see this firsthand—without the media and all the fanfare, just the minister and his adviser sitting face to face with members of my constituency who are involved hands-on and daily trying to provide assistance and support to people who suffer a disability.

I again put on the record my appreciation to the minister for his willingness to find time in his busy schedule to travel to my constituency. It is not a safe Labor seat but an Independent electorate represented by a member of the crossbenches. It is great to see that the minister is prepared to spend time in non-government electorates that are not represented by members of the Labor Party and to listen to our concerns. I look forward to inviting him to come back at a time that is convenient for him to further meet with some of the not-for-profit groups in my electorate which are doing a wonderful job. They are volunteers who put in 120 per cent effort. We really appreciate the minister's willingness to listen and respond to our calls for help. On that issue, it is important that we focus on this whole-of-government response. The Sunshine Coast Children's Therapy Centre is certainly finding it very difficult at the moment to raise additional dollars from the community to respond to a shortfall in funding. I understand that there has been correspondence through the minister's office from my office to see if we can explore ways of trying to provide additional support.

I simply say without taking up any more time—there are many members on the speaking list who want to speak on this very important bill—that I thank the minister for his commitment to try to provide any assistance that his government can for people with disabilities on the Sunshine Coast. I look forward to inviting him, at a time that is convenient to him, back to my part of the Sunshine Coast where we can spend

quality time with the service providers—without the fanfare, without the media—to hear firsthand some of the concerns and see if the government can respond in a proactive way to their calls for help. Without further ado, I commend the bill to the House and look forward with interest to this bill proceeding to the consideration in detail stage. I also look forward to the budget in this regard, which is only a few months away. I commend the bill to the House.