



Speech by

Hon. Warren Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard Thursday, 10 August 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Disability Services

Hon. FW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors) (10.16 am): In one of his first statements as Liberal leader in this place, the member for Moggill put his foot in his mouth with some misguided claims concerning an important initiative in the disability sector. On Tuesday, he called for action on the issue of young people with a disability being confined to aged-care nursing homes and urged the government to allocate funds so that—and I quote—‘We do not just keep ignoring the problem’. It is absolute nonsense for the member for Moggill to suggest that the government has been ignoring this issue.

The Queensland government has been very actively involved in negotiating a bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth to reduce the number of younger people with a disability residing in aged-care facilities. I helped initiate action on this matter with the original exercise to gather the relevant data that informed the submission that the Premier took to the Council of Australian Governments.

It is worth noting that the formal offer of the bilateral agreement was only received from the Commonwealth in mid-July. Some negotiations on the wording of the agreement were required. I was not going to sign off on something just because it was put forward by the Commonwealth. I wanted to be sure that we were getting the best deal for Queensland. Certainly, detailed negotiations have occurred between my officers and the Commonwealth government, including to correct some errors from the Commonwealth government that had made their way into the bilateral agreement.

I can inform the House that this week I have signed the bilateral agreement. The agreement represents a very positive move to address a complex and pressing problem. This coming weekend, we will call for tenders from organisations interested in developing the Integrated Living Model as the initial implementation phase of the bilateral agreement. Under the agreement, Queensland and the Commonwealth have committed funding of \$23.9 million towards this initiative, which runs over a five-year period to June 2011. It is expected that we will reduce the number of younger people with a disability residing in aged-care facilities by as many as 30 people by the end of the first year and by as many as 214 by the end of the five-year period. This is positive news for many Queenslanders with a disability.

Tabled paper: Copy of ministerial statement by Hon. W Pitt titled ‘Younger people with a disability residing in aged care facilities’.