



Speech by

**Phil Weightman**

**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2007

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## **COMMUNITY SERVICES BILL**

**Mr WEIGHTMAN** (Cleveland—ALP) (3.18 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the Community Services Bill 2007. This bill is designed to help build sustainable communities by facilitating access by Queenslanders to community services. I must say this sits very well with me because I am all for building a better community within the Redlands.

There are about 860 community organisations that receive funding under the Family Services Act 1987. Some of the services provided include neighbourhood centres, community safety services and support for seniors, young people and homeless people through areas such as youth justice and domestic and family violence prevention. Some of the groups in my area also include In-Sync which is a support accommodation program service, Redlands Arts Council and Redland Shire Band—all very important groups within our community. Funding for these services is managed jointly through the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and Minister for Seniors and Youth. It is essential that the systems and processes associated with the administration of the Family Services Act should be based on sound and up-to-date legislation. It is important that the non-government organisations that provide an ever-increasing support base for members of our community have a clearer and more transparent process surrounding the provision of funding and support and we need to ensure that these processes are easily understood. This bill is about establishing equitable criteria for community organisations to gain assistance. It will clearly outline not only the type of assistance available but how and when it will occur.

Part 2 of the bill will address the standards of equity, safety and accountability to ensure community expectations in these regards are met. Service delivery has always been a potentially questionable area and now there will be stronger options to deal with these concerns. The introduced standards for the provision of community services will ensure the quality of those services that are being delivered within the designated area. To ensure this occurs and to complement part 2, there will be introduced in part 7 of the bill a monitoring and enforcement framework which will be triggered by noncompliance with the bill or the prescribed requirements under the regulations. Decision-making processes will be subject to internal and external review, as outlined in part 9 of the bill. With this comes an appeal process as outlined in clause 94 that allows a person to apply to the chief executive to review a reviewable decision. The bill in its entirety not only adds clarity to the process but also provides for transparency that will ensure that the integrity of the system meets, if not exceeds, basic community requirements. This bill is about ensuring equity and parity when dealing with essential non-government community service providers in relation to applications for funding and support as well as the quality of the services provided, and this will help build better communities. I compliment the minister and his staff and I commend the bill to the House.