



Speech by

Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Wednesday, 7 March 2007

COMMONWEALTH STATE TERRITORY DISABILITY AGREEMENT

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (10.28 am): On behalf of the thousands of Queenslanders living with a disability and their families, I express my extreme disappointment in the federal government's failure to respond to the urgent and apparent need for an increased contribution to the fourth iteration of the Commonwealth State Territory Disability Agreement. As parliamentary secretary to the minister for disability services, late last year I gave evidence to the Senate community affairs committee's inquiry into the funding and operation of the CSTDA.

I stressed to senators from all parties Queensland's concern that the Commonwealth contribution to disability funding had dropped to less than 20 per cent, leaving the states and territories to provide over 80 per cent. As at today the Commonwealth's level of funding to Queensland represents 16 per cent. The senators heard this plea and unanimously reported on the overwhelming unmet need and called upon all governments to increase funding. In the life of the current agreement, due to expire in June, Queensland has provided disability funding in the order of \$338 million more than required under CSTDA3.

However, Howard government minister Mal Brough has turned his back on these pleas and refused to provide additional money towards services for Australians living with a disability. Instead of helping Australians living with a disability and their families, Mal Brough's response has consisted of blaming the states and territories and questioning the accountability of the disability service providers. I urge Mr Brough to read the Senate report and genuinely return to the negotiating table with the states and territories; otherwise fair-minded Queenslanders, especially those in Longman, will turn their back on him.