



Speech by

Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Younger People in Residential Aged Care

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.12 am): During the estimates hearing I highlighted the great progress the Bligh government has achieved in the Younger People in Residential Aged Care initiative. To recap for the benefit of the whole House, I point out that the joint state-federal initiative has helped 81 younger people with a disability to find more age-appropriate accommodation since 1 July 2006. This figure includes 36 younger people with a disability who have been assisted to move out of residential aged care. On top of that, 45 people with a disability have been diverted from entering residential aged-care facilities. This means that we have exceeded the target set by the Rudd government.

Those figures do not include another four people who are currently being assisted to move from these facilities. There are still a lot more people to assist, with the \$23.9 million allocated over five years, but it is still an impressive record to date. Impressive as it may be, they are just figures on a page and there is a human side to this initiative that is often overlooked.

Last month I had the pleasure to open Santorini Place, the Life Without Barriers house at Forest Lake. It is home to four young people with a disability who would otherwise be living in aged-care facilities. The father of one of the residents, Richard Vearer, took the opportunity to explain to me what the Younger People in Residential Aged Care initiative meant to his son, Paul. He had to choke back tears as he explained that when his son was in a nursing home he was unresponsive, dreading each day in the institution and had to be assisted in every task all day, every day. Since moving to Santorini Place, Paul has been transformed into the fun-loving son he once was and is able to interact with everyone. He regularly goes out on trips and can again help with simple tasks around the house such as making his own cup of tea. Richard explained that the move was a transformation not only for Paul but also for his entire family.

I am also pleased to announce that this Friday I will attend a sod turning in Inala for another facility being constructed by the Brisbane Housing Co. under this exciting program. The Bligh government committed \$1.8 million in July 2008 and, when complete, the complex will house another eight people who would otherwise be in nursing homes.

In this House we often concentrate on meeting bottom lines and targets but forget that there is a human impact in every decision or program that we implement. The Younger People in Residential Aged Care initiative is one that is changing lives for the better.