



Speech by

Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Tuesday, 23 March 2010

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Disability Services

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.25 am): With Queensland growing by over 100,000 people every year, the disability services sector is presented with many unique challenges. An Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report has predicted that 2.3 million Australians would have a profound or severe disability by 2030. One year ago, I identified three priorities. They were to provide more options to older carers caring for a loved one with a disability, to assist younger people with a disability who are living in aged-care facilities to move out and to provide support for children with a disability at the earliest point after diagnosis.

Firstly, we are leading the country in delivering support for older carers. As I stated in parliament in the last sitting, over 40 per cent of our new social housing will assist families who have a member with a disability. Queensland has delivered 19 out of the 40 new beds so far created across Australia as part of our \$18.3 million share of the Commonwealth's disability assistance package. With this support, much of the pressure associated with planning for their child's future will be alleviated.

Secondly, it is clear that aged care is not the best accommodation option for younger people with a disability. That is why, through the joint state-Commonwealth initiative, we have assisted around 100 younger people to date with more appropriate accommodation options. Lives are being changed.

Thirdly, and most importantly for the future of service delivery, the Bligh government has initiated innovative programs to help our children with a disability. Child Connect officers are currently being appointed in Townsville and Ipswich. They will proactively seek out families who have a child with a disability and link them with the services that they need early on.

In addition, we are providing \$1 million on the Sunshine Coast for a new self-directed pilot program to provide up to 80 families with more flexibility. One year on, I have listened to hundreds of families throughout Queensland. They want us to be more proactive, they want us to provide more flexibility and they want us to provide more specialist services, and we are delivering.