



Speech by

**Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk**

**MEMBER FOR INALA**

Hansard Wednesday, 1 September 2010

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Acquired Brain Injury**

**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (10.25 am): Last month, I officially opened the new premises of the Brain Injury Association of Queensland at West End in Brisbane. This organisation has been helping Queenslanders and their families for 25 years. At the opening, I had the chance to meet with many people who have had an acquired brain injury. They are using the centre and they told me that it is changing their lives. The association provides advice and information to people with acquired brain injuries as well as referrals to medical, rehabilitation and community support services. The state government provides \$3.6 million a year to help the Brain Injury Association of Queensland carry out its vital work.

Acquired brain injury can happen to anyone at any time. It affects one in 45 Australians, or around 433,000 people. Almost three-quarters of people with an acquired brain injury are aged under 65. Over 11,000 Queenslanders develop an acquired brain injury each and every year. Motor vehicle accidents account for 70 per cent of these injuries, and the majority of people affected are aged 16 to 24. Males are more likely than females to have an acquired brain injury. On the six o'clock news at night, we often hear about the car crashes but very seldom do we hear about what happens afterwards and the road to recovery for these victims. We rarely hear how difficult it is for these young people and their families when their lives are turned completely upside down.

The Bligh government is committed to supporting Queenslanders with acquired brain injuries. Our Younger People in Residential Aged Care initiative has helped move or divert over 100 Queenslanders with a disability from entering residential aged-care facilities. Many of these people we have moved out have had an acquired brain injury. Last month, 14 Queensland MPs attended a breakfast here at Parliament House to hear about the amazing work that the Brain Injury Association of Queensland is doing. This breakfast was organised by the member for Barron River, who has shown great commitment and passion about raising the awareness of this issue amongst his fellow colleagues, and I congratulate him.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I also attended a forum in Cairns in June with the member for Barron River to listen to the needs of Far North Queensland residents affected by an acquired brain injury. I have personally met with Jennifer Cullen, and I have asked her to submit an application about funding that is needed to establish a dedicated rehabilitation centre in Cairns. This is about the government listening and responding. We need to raise more awareness about this very important issue to ensure that people with an acquired brain injury can live back in their communities with their families and their friends.