



Speech by

**Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

Hansard Tuesday, 8 June 2010

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## **DISABILITY SERVICES**

**Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (12.07 pm): I was delighted to be present last Wednesday, 2 June at the launch of the Inclusive Future for People with a Disability together with the Premier and the Minister for Disability Services, Annastacia Palaszczuk. We all remember the wonderful and real advances made to the lives of people with a disability during the breaking down the barriers campaign—in my view, one of the most successful campaigns in bringing to the forefront the issues facing people with a disability and their families. Therefore, it was extremely pleasing to be present with the Premier and the minister to announce that a record \$1.61 billion would be allocated for disability and community care services in Queensland, up from \$1.4 billion last financial year.

This 15.2 per cent increase in funding puts Queensland in a strong position to ensure that even more people get a service, which I know will be well received in my electorate of Brisbane Central. This record spend will result in better care and support for many Queenslanders and their families in the area of disability and community care where early, excellent and essential services are crucial for people with a disability to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives.

Total funding announced last week includes around \$529 million for Home and Community Care, around \$28.6 million for community mental health services, \$4.4 million to support young people with a disability leaving school, \$3.2 million to support people with spinal cord injuries, \$2.9 million for early intervention and support services for the families of children with a disability, \$1 million for the community living initiative to help people with a disability to live independently in the community, and \$1 million to create new autism early intervention centres in Bundaberg and Mackay.

Already Queensland is leading the way when it comes to diverting younger people with a disability from aged-care facilities, and so far 100 younger people have been assisted to move or to be diverted from aged-care facilities into supported accommodation, enabling them to live independently in the community. However, there is no doubt that more needs to be done, and I welcome wholeheartedly even more help to more people making the transition to independent living, which improves their quality of life while freeing up aged-care beds. After all, what could be more important than giving children a better start in life, helping young and adult Queenslanders to retain their independence, and supporting families and carers? That is why it was extremely pleasing to welcome the release of the draft *10-year plan for supporting Queenslanders with a disability* for public feedback to build on the work already underway. The 10-year plan proposes 10 priorities and strategies to improve access to transport, education, health care, housing, employment, social, arts, sport and recreational pursuits. This plan is now out in the community for consultation and I encourage all stakeholders in the community to provide their valued feedback and comments. There will be forums held throughout the state in order to give Queenslanders an opportunity to have their say.

We all know that our children are our future, and also released on the day was *Building bright futures: an action plan for children with a disability—birth to eight years 2010-13*. This plan focuses on delivering more responsive and better targeted supports and services to children with a disability and their families. The early years of a child's life have a significant impact on their future health, development, learning and wellbeing. Building Bright Futures aims to connect families to the supports and services they

need to meet their child's disability support needs and maximise developmental opportunity. There are five priority areas identified through consultation with families, non-government service providers and government agencies such as access to information, early intervention services, services in rural and regional areas, a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, and a strong evidence base about what really is working. The Department of Communities will work with relevant government and non-government service providers to implement the action plan and to promote social inclusion of children with a disability and their families.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the parents, carers and non-government service providers for the continued valuable and meaningful work they undertake day in and day out in the disability sector. There are many service providers in my electorate whose input into the draft 10-year plan will be greatly received and valued. These service providers provide excellent and life-changing essential services, and I also thank the volunteers and dedicated hardworking staff who, together with families and carers, make a real difference. Your efforts are recognised and greatly valued.

*(Time expired)*