




Speech by

Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

Hansard Wednesday, 30 November 2011

SUPPORT SERVICES

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (11.12 pm): I rise to tell members about a very sad situation of a young lady who is desperate. Lauren is 23 years old and has a one-year-old and a four-year-old at home with her. Lauren has Crohn's disease, has recently had major surgery and has been on a disability pension for a long time. Lauren's grandmother Colleen lives on the Gold Coast and has been travelling back and forth every day to help Lauren, but now she has a virus and is not allowed to go there. Lauren's mother works full time but picks up the one-year-old each day to take to day care. The four-year-old goes to day care twice a week and on the other days is at home with Lauren. Colleen has been trying desperately to get Lauren some domestic help, to no avail. Lauren is unable to bend over to perform the usual domestic tasks. She does not want assistance with showering, because she is too embarrassed. Her four-year-old daughter has been helping her wash and dress.

The problem is that there are no services to provide support for Lauren. She falls through the cracks. Even the social worker at the Gold Coast Hospital has told her that there are no agencies or government departments on this side of the river that can assist her. St Vincent's is keeping the lawns mowed et cetera but cannot provide domestic assistance. Colleen has also tried Spiritus, BlueCare, Disability Services and Queensland Health to no avail. Lauren's case is classed as medical, so she does not qualify for the same assistance as people whose cases are classed as disabled.

The Salvo Care Line cannot help and it suggested Lauren contact local church groups. Colleen says that Lauren cannot do vacuuming, wash floors, clean or hang out washing. She also needs help with meal preparation. Colleen's daughter, who works full time, is exhausted as she has to help out before and after work with the children and the house. Bluecare has explained that the problem is that there is a massive gap in assistance and has suggested service clubs. The HACCC guidelines stipulate assistance for those aged 65 and over. Ultimately, we contacted the Highway Christian Church and outlined Lauren's plight and what help she needs. Pastor Nathan at the Highway Christian Church said that the church has a group of volunteers who assist people in the community.

This is a work in progress. The points I make are that there are big gaps in our support networks that are funded through government sources. The churches are so often the last port of call for so many in our community. So often when the system lets people down the church is the fallback. So often in government we see a 'can't do' attitude and hear a 'no' before we hear anything else. We look at ways of compartmentalising people for the sake of cost-effectiveness. At the end of the day, so many people fall through the gaps.

The good news is that our churches have a 'yes' attitude. This morning I had the pleasure, along with a number of parliamentary colleagues from both sides of the House and the crossbenches, of meeting a person who made this very point. We as leaders in our community need to adopt a 'say yes' mentality. More often than not when we say no that is the end of it. But if we say yes, so many possibilities are opened up.

I have every confidence that the Highway Christian Church will be able to fill the gap for this young lady and provide her with the help that she so desperately needs. I implore everyone during their day-to-day activities to look for ways to say yes.