




Speech by  
**Bill Byrne**

**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

Hansard Tuesday, 21 August 2012

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## **NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME**

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (9.31 pm): I rise to address recent comments made by the member for Mirani as published in a number of regional newspapers in Central Queensland. The member for Mirani has attempted to convince Central Queenslanders that this LNP government wholly supports the NDIS. It is simply ridiculous for the member to suggest that the LNP government in any way realistically supports the NDIS. Clearly, local LNP members have been on the receiving end of considerable community disquiet, and rightly so. The member's statements are as valid and grounded as the LNP pre-election statements which said, 'Our decisions will be open and transparent,' or, 'The public sector has nothing to fear from an LNP government.'

The Newman government has never been remotely interested in embracing the opportunities presented to Queensland by hosting an NDIS site. This fact is demonstrated by the unprofessional, lightweight letter masquerading as a submission made by the LNP to the federal government regarding a potential site. The nature of the submission and the mealy-mouthed comments to support it reveal this government for what it is—all talk and no action, and certainly no action when it comes to supporting those most in need in our communities.

I invite the member for Mirani to attend one of his local special school P&C meetings. Perhaps by talking to parents and teachers who live with these situations on a daily basis he may be able to form a more rounded and considered view on what needs to be done in this state. It is simply unsatisfactory for this government and the member to try to spin their way out of it. Queenslanders as a whole recognise what has occurred here and condemn this government absolutely. After all, this initial debate is about a trial site; it is not about the ultimate funding model for a national rollout of the scheme. That is a matter for further discussion between the states and the Commonwealth, with the Productivity Commission's report being simply an input.

The truth is that the member for Mirani is part of a government that has decided to deny 5,000 or so profoundly disabled Queenslanders the opportunities that would have accrued from hosting a trial site. There is no reasonable defence for this, and every member of this LNP government should hang their heads in shame—and most government members know this in their hearts. Just in case some do not understand what the NDIS is about, I can say that it is about fundamental reform of the way that disability services are delivered to hundreds of thousands of Australians, their families and their carers. The NDIS is about changing lives, and it will be as significant as or more significant than the rollout of Medicare.

Few things in this chamber really get me very cranky, but this is one issue which makes me white hot with hostility. May I suggest to the 78 LNP members present that actions speak louder than words. The government's words to date represent nothing but shallow froth and bubble from a cold-hearted, desensitised and disconnected regime. It is like I am in a room full of B-52 pilots flying at 30,000 feet, dropping bombs and never seeing the faces of their victims. I encourage the members of this government to embrace an NDIS as soon as humanly possible.