




Speech by

Darren Grimwade

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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DISABILITY SERVICES (YOUR LIFE YOUR CHOICE) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (8.29 pm): I rise to contribute in the debate on the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. Those who know me will understand that I am a fierce advocate for supporting those with disabilities in Queensland and in my electorate. I was really pleased when this legislation came to the parliament and took a keen interest in reviewing it and consulting with my community to gain their feedback. Honourable members in this place will remember that in July of this year the Labor opposition voted against a motion that supported the implementation of the NDIS and called on the federal government to fully fund the scheme, this being in line with the Productivity Commissioner's report. Honourable members will also remember the terrible politically opportunistic football game that the Labor Party played in relation to the NDIS trial sites that this government was, sadly, unable to participate in due to the terrible financial mess that the previous Labor government has left us in.

In saying that, this legislation puts to bed any confusion that anyone may have had in relation to the Newman government's intentions to support those with a disability, prepare this state for the eventual NDIS rollout and provide those with disabilities with a choice of how their funding is delivered. This government believes strongly that people with a disability should have the freedom to make choices about how they live, including the support they receive, through disabilities support in this state. This legislation will allow those with disabilities to have a distinct say on how funding should and will be spent specific to their individual needs, otherwise known as self-directed funding. Your Life Your Choice is an exciting initiative that will give people with disabilities great choice, flexibility and control over the existing funding they currently receive through disability services.

As I stated earlier, I have been out in my community seeking feedback on this legislation. Over the past few weeks I have spoken to many people in my community who are either disabled themselves, have children with disabilities or are involved in supporting those with disabilities in the community. Last week, I was able to visit my local Riding for the Disabled group in Burpengary. This fantastic group of people work tirelessly in a voluntary capacity to offer those with disabilities the opportunity to ride horses, interact with horses and feel at home making a contribution to the community. I watched the joy on the kids' faces as they waited their turn to ride the horses and it was apparent that this sort of activity is critical to them as a regular social outing and a forum for participation that shows there are no boundaries, particularly for kids with disabilities.

I took the opportunity to speak to the parents who were in attendance about that sort of program and what it meant to them. I asked their thoughts on disability funding in Queensland. The parents highlighted to me just how much the kids look forward to their weekly interaction with the animals and their friends. One parent indicated that it is one of the few times that they can be assured that their child will be up in the morning and ready, with their 'Riding for the Disabled' shirt on, albeit inside out and back to front sometimes, boots in hand and waiting at the door. A number of volunteers who work at this facility also have a disability. They take great pride in making a contribution to their community and helping the young riders with their Saturday ambitions. Those volunteers attend week in and week out and assist the riders with the horses and cleaning the stables. Through speaking to the people on the day, it was very apparent that they supported the new funding model for disabilities in Queensland. Many indicated they actually

supported the NDIS, although they were unsure as to how that funding model would work and how it may benefit them overall.

Last week, the member for Kallangur, 'Big Trev' Ruthenberg, and I visited another group with disabilities in my electorate. Dancing Wheelies Inc. operates a program for those confined to a wheelchair, who meet at the Morayfield community hall to learn how to dance. I arrived unsure of how I was to participate in the activities. However, as I entered and saw the grins on the faces of the people in attendance, I soon understood that I would be experiencing life as a person in a wheelchair and would be participating in a dance or two. The positivity in the room and the joy on the faces of those in attendance was truly amazing. I was welcomed in and allocated a wheelchair, which I soon learnt would become my chair for the dance routine. As I took to my wheelchair and lined up, ready to learn the new dance, I was a little nervous about how I would go and I was concerned that I might let down my partner. I had a great time dancing with the members of the group. I thank all the members of the organisation who assisted me in the moves and getting through the routine. I am certainly not a superstar at dancing in a wheelchair. However, the members of the group are amazing and I would encourage anyone from around my local area who is confined to a wheelchair to get in touch with that group.

Another example of my involvement with those in my local area who have disabilities is my regular attendance at the Caboolture Special School. The Caboolture Special School is one of the biggest special schools in Queensland. Since becoming the member for Morayfield, I have visited the school on numerous occasions for events such as art exhibitions, parades and, most recently, to assist in their Taste on Torrens Tuckshop. My visits to the school have given me a great opportunity to interact with the kids, speak to the parents and hear first hand of the issues that carers, teachers and support staff are having. The Taste of Torrens Tuckshop, also known as their hospitality kitchen, is something that has to be seen to be believed. I currently own a hospitality small business that prepares food and coffee. To enter the canteen and witness the kids making cappuccinos, lattes and milkshakes unaided was truly amazing. The quality of those drinks was at a standard that I would be most proud to serve in my cafe. On the day I attended, we prepared lunch for an interschool function. To work with those students and see them prepare restaurant-quality food and take such pride in what they do was truly an honour.

Recently I discussed this bill with Jenny Butler, who is the president of the P&C at the Caboolture Special School. Those who know Jenny will understand there is no better person to represent people with disabilities, especially kids. Jenny is a passionate person and cares dearly and greatly about disability services and the funding around it. I was glad when Jenny supported the bill and the intent that it is trying to achieve in the overall scheme of funding in Queensland. I thank Jenny for that.

In my community, I have visited the Caboolture disability indoor cricket team. I took the opportunity to visit the group and see them in action. The day I attended, I presented a Queensland flag to the president, Mr Pat Rossiter, and congratulated players James Rossiter and Danny Williams, who have been selected to represent Queensland. I take this opportunity to congratulate James and Danny on their marvellous achievements in representing Queensland, again showing, as I have said throughout my speech tonight, that there are no boundaries for those with disabilities. During the visit, I was able to pad up, mark my crease and face a few deliveries from the bowlers. I must say, I was bowled middle stump, first ball. Those people show that there are no boundaries to those with disabilities when it comes to getting out and giving something a go. It was very inspirational to see those fine young men having such fun and interacting with each other.

Many months ago now, I supported the NDIS rally in Morayfield. I was joined by my colleagues Ms Lisa France from Pumicestone, Mr Wyatt Roy, the federal member for Longman, and Sue Boyce, the Queensland senator. We marched down Morayfield Road, holding placards and wearing shirts in support of the NDIS in Queensland. As members can see, I have had the opportunity to discuss concerns in regard to disabilities funding with many constituents in my community. Throughout those discussions, concerns have always been raised around the funding and the equality of how it is distributed and allocated. In regards to the NDIS trial sites—and it is that; only trial sites—I think it is important to note that it proposes to trial only three elements of the full scheme. Queensland already has two of those elements and Your Life Your Choice ticks the boxes for the third element. The first element of the NDIS trial site program is a systematic equitable assessment tool. We already have that here in Queensland. The second element is that of local area coordinators, which we already have in Queensland, too. The third element is self-direction and that is what Your Life Your Choice, this initiative, is all about.

The Newman government has made a record investment into disability services in Queensland this year, allocating \$959 million. I care for people with disabilities and I know every member of this government does, too. This bill will ensure that Queensland is preparing itself for the eventual rollout of the NDIS and that we are setting ourselves up to be prepared for future disability service demands in Queensland. For this reason I urge all members of this parliament to support the successful passage of the legislation before the House tonight. I commend the bill to the House.