




Speech by

Steve Davies

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

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DISABILITY SERVICES (YOUR LIFE YOUR CHOICE) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (9.16 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Disability Services (Your Life Your Choice) Amendment Bill 2012. To begin with, I would like to commend the minister for this great initiative, as many others here tonight have mentioned. As someone who has worked in the disabilities sector, I really commend the minister. This is a very thoughtful bill and a very needed bill, and I want to commend the minister for her great work in putting it together.

This government continues to get on with the job of dealing with Queensland's most pressing issues. This government is not afraid to tackle the big issues, and it has been left to us to clean up the mess from the previous government—whose too-hard basket is overflowing with unresolved issues. With that in mind, it pleases me no end to be part of a government which is willing to go to great lengths to meet people on their level and provide disability services that will allow people to live the life they choose.

The government is acting for those less fortunate by implementing strategies to strengthen front-line disability services in order to provide a more stable and consistent service that fits into national and other jurisdictional networks and provides peace of mind and flexibility to those who need the service most. By providing people with the opportunity to choose their own host service, we are handing back to people the ability to shape their own futures. Queenslanders are resourceful and proactive people who now have the ability to take hold of their futures and choose for themselves the specialised disability service that suits them best. Again, this is LNP policy at its finest.

Like other bills that have passed through parliament under this government, this bill will empower Queenslanders and not nanny them—a method proven to result in a better quality of life. As well as a person-centred approach to planning—which is aimed at providing a broader range of support and service options, increasing choice to providers and moving to individualised funding, including direct payments—this bill acknowledges the right of those with a disability to take control of their lives. This bill moves Queensland into a contemporary service delivery environment. This bill is about saying, 'We don't know better than you,' and recognising that people with disabilities and their families are experts on their own lives.

These amendments and the government's Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework will provide the opportunity for people with a disability and their families to decide for themselves if they want to manage their funding and what types of support would improve their lives most. Your Life Your Choice aims to provide clients with a level of control over their funding that they want and provide choices about the types of services and support a person can access with their funding. Under the host provider model, a client can work with the host provider to have as much or as little control over the management of their funding as they like. For example, a client can accept full responsibility for planning, budgeting and organising their support, and funding will be advanced to the client's bank account. Alternatively, the person can assume only some responsibility for planning, budgeting and organising.

Under the direct funding model—phase 2—that these amendments will facilitate, a client will be able to manage the funds themselves or nominate a person to manage the funds on their behalf. The framework sets out a broad and inclusive list of types of support that a person will be able to access. These

are not limited to current definitions of disability services under the Disability Services Act but include support like guide and assistance dogs, whole-of-life planning, aids and appliances, and additional cost of living associated with having a disability. Consistent with the NDIS, clients will be able to choose the services they need relevant to their disability that are reasonable and necessary to alleviate their disability. The level of control they want over the management of their funding is very important.

According to census data, Capalaba—my electorate—currently has 6,166 people receiving unpaid assistance due to a disability and there are over 2,000 people who have need of assistance due to their disability—that is, they require a carer or some care and assistance. This is only a snapshot of the reality that we face in Capalaba. I take very seriously my responsibility as their local member to provide this support. We have some fantastic agencies in Capalaba that actually do provide world-class support to those with disabilities. We have Horizon, which is an agency that provides a gamut of care—everything from what once was called a sheltered workshop but today is a place where people can earn a living and hold a job. They also provide a number of other different initiatives to enable people to get on with life and live life to the fullest. We also have the Cerebral Palsy League in my electorate. They do a fantastic job with some of the most disabled people in the state. These are only figures but they give no indication of the life-changing realities that families face when they encounter a disability. That is why this bill is so important.

The government recognises the significance of disabilities and not only the impacts they have on the lives of those who are immediately affected but also the flow-on effects. The bill is an important step in recognising and implementing a better strategy for assisting those in our community who feel these effects. We on this side of the House are committed to making the right call for Queenslanders, particularly those with a disability. That is why I commend this bill to the House.