




Speech by

Tim Mulherin

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Hansard Tuesday, 31 July 2012

MOTION: NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.38 pm): I second the motion moved by the opposition leader. The Premier continues to play politics rather than support a trial in Queensland of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The premiers of New South Wales and Victoria did not take long to reject Mr Newman's obstructionist and politically motivated approach to the NDIS.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to refer to other members by their correct titles.

Mr MULHERIN: They recognise that the NDIS is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of people with a disability and in the lives of their families and carers. Queensland should not be missing out. Even former Prime Minister John Howard has applauded the NDIS and has said that it is 'something that the country in 10 years time can feel good about'. Mr Howard also said, 'I think it is something that a decent, compassionate society should find the resources to provide more for.' I wonder whether Mr Howard thinks Premier Newman is decent and compassionate. The Premier's stance on the NDIS is indicative of the mean-spirited, cold-hearted nature of this government.

As we have seen over the last few months, the Premier and the LNP government are very quick to slash funding and services that help some of the most vulnerable in our community. We have seen the debacle which has been the public housing shake-up by Minister Bruce Flegg, threatening tenants, many of them elderly or with a disability. We have also seen the slashing of so many front-line services like Sisters Inside, Family Planning Queensland, the Queensland Association of Healthy Communities and tenants' advocacy services. But last week we saw the Newman government show that it is simply mean by hitting Queenslanders with a disability not once, not twice, but three times—a triple whammy.

At the start of last week this government began cutting support to the families and carers of people with a disability by cutting the Family Support Program, which provides items such as medical aids, incontinence aids and child-care subsidies. Then the LNP government abolished subsidies to taxis transporting people with disabilities. To top the week off we saw the cold-hearted efforts by the Premier at COAG, coming back from Canberra empty handed for the people of Queensland when it comes to the NDIS. Then we saw the cruel hoax that the Premier played on the community of Gympie, promising that they would be a trial site for the NDIS.

The disability minister's pathetic so-called submission on NDIS was only 1½ pages, when Victoria and New South Wales had submissions of more than 100 pages each. The fact that the Queensland effort was not even considered by the Commonwealth government shows that the Newman government were never serious about having a trial site in Queensland. I understand that the letter from the disability minister even blames the Commonwealth for creating 'further uncertainty for people with a disability and their families and carers'. The only government creating uncertainty for people with a disability and their carers is the cold-hearted Newman government.

It is obvious that the Newman government has twisted priorities when it comes to the NDIS. The Premier can find money to build himself and his ministers a brand-new Executive Building in the middle of Brisbane but he cannot stump up to help change the lives of people with a disability. Similarly, the Premier

can find \$300,000 to mount a High Court challenge against the mining tax to protect heavyweight LNP donors but cannot help some of Queensland's most vulnerable people.

The Newman government's actions are simply mean. These are not the actions of a government that can be characterised by the 'humility, grace and dignity' that the Premier had promised.