




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Record of Proceedings, 4 March 2014

**DISABILITY SERVICES (RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (8.03 pm): I certainly rise to support the Disability Services (Restrictive Practices) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It would be remiss of me if I did not speak to it. There are disability services in my electorate and also the Beenleigh Special School. I certainly have built a very strong relationship with that school, especially in the last two years. Firstly, I want to thank the minister profusely for her dedication in bringing this bill to the House because of the simple fact that it reduces red tape. As we heard from the member for Burdekin, there was broad support for this bill and the community was 100 per cent behind this legislation because this is a very difficult area. This bill applies to restrictive practices—for example, seclusion and restraint—by funded disability service providers on adults with intellectual and cognitive disabilities in response to behaviour that results in physical harm or serious risk of physical harm to the adults and other individuals.

Every time I go to Beenleigh Special School I wonder what will happen to those students. Some of them will get into mainstream business while some will get into the trades. I hear wonderful stories from years past where these students have made a life for themselves in the mainstream world. For those other individuals with more severe disabilities, unfortunately, it is a very difficult area.

This bill goes a long way to listening to the actual stakeholders—the adults, the families, the carers, the decision makers under the framework and the funded disability services. My local community group of Centacare runs the Albert River Community Farm at Yatala. Last year the Deputy Mayor of the Gold Coast, Councillor Donna Gates, and I attended an open day on 17 November. It was a fantastic day to see what it has installed for these individuals and what types of processes it has for disabled individuals. More recently though—only a couple of weeks ago—I attended a meeting with Centacare at the Albert River Community Farm and I have to say that the individuals who work in these facilities have a true passion. They really have a true passion. They are working so hard to make a real difference to these individuals' lives. To give members an overview about the Albert River Community Farm, the whole idea is to get these kids' hands dirty turning soil, planting seeds and watering gardens to get them involved in something meaningful. One lady said to me, 'Mark, the great thing about these projects is they actually build their confidence. They actually make them feel that they are actually a part of our society,' and having that internal confidence is making a world of difference for these people.

As I said, a great thing also about this bill is that it cuts back on red tape. For instance, transferring from one provider to another is streamlined under this bill. It makes it easier. In recent times we have worked very closely with people at the Beenleigh Special School to get them a new bus. That is absolutely fantastic for the special school because the old bus was falling apart. That just shows that they feel appreciated. It just shows that they want to be part of our society and they feel appreciated by somebody taking the time to help fight for that funding and organising funding between

certain community groups and helping them out where they needed it. When it comes to restricted practices, this bill covers areas like challenging behaviours, and that includes people kicking, biting and those who self-harm. These are the areas that we are talking about. Students at the Beenleigh Special School are trying their best to understand but, because of the issues that they have to deal with, it certainly does make it very hard.

Recently, when I attended the opening ceremony for the school year I must say that, when I got up to speak to the whole student body, it certainly shook me up because I could see how hard these kids were trying to make a difference. Usually, I can talk for quite some time but I honestly could not put words together for more than a minute because I became so emotional about these kids. It was wonderful to see them trying.

This bill upholds human rights and provides a high degree of accountability. It introduces a requirement for service providers to provide a statement to the adult and those close to the adult about the use of restrictive practices to enable them to understand the framework, the avenues for complaints and redress, and how they can participate in planning and decision making. Very clearly, this legislation contains a high degree of accountability. There are avenues by which to address complaints. There are avenues by which to understand the decision-making process. Certainly, this legislation keeps up to date with best practice. I say to the honourable the minister that, by introducing this legislation, she is making life so much better and so much easier for these individuals and their families.

I would like to finish by commending the minister and commending the committee for their outstanding work on this bill. As I said, it would be remiss of me to not speak to this bill as my cousin certainly does have a high degree of intellectual disability. My aunty has looked after him for all of his 40 years and I am very proud of her for that. I am also very proud that this government is not only getting on with the job of making these people's lives easier but also, and most importantly, giving them hope for a better future. I thank the minister.