




Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2016

**DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.27 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Disability Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I will go nice and slow just for the member. The National Disability Insurance Scheme is good for Queensland in more ways than one. It is also good for jobs and job creation. We know that the NDIS will be great for people in Queensland who have a disability as it provides them with choice and control over the services that they require.

I generally enjoy banter with the member for Mudgeeraba and the member for Buderim as they are also members of the committee that considered this bill, but the patting on the back of the great work that the LNP has done in regard to the NDIS is an absolute travesty. It is a joke. Let us look at the history. The LNP was dragged kicking and screaming—

**Mr Crandon:** You weren't here. You wouldn't know.

**Mr HARPER:** I will take that interjection. The member is absolutely right. I was not here.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Order! Member for Thuringowa, can I draw you back to the long title of the bill, please.

**Mr HARPER:** I take the interjection. I was not here. I just read the *Courier-Mail* and watched the TV like everybody else. There were thousands—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order members! We will wait until everybody calms down and then we will get going again.

**Mr HARPER:** Like very many concerned Queenslanders, I saw the thousands of people protesting that the Newman government had absolutely delayed the signing of the heads of agreement to the NDIS.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** Yes, you did. Now you pat yourselves on the back and are caring?

**Mr Crandon:** Why don't you just say something sensible?

**Mr HARPER:** You do not like hearing the truth.

**Mr Crandon:** Say some positive stuff about the bill.

**Mr HARPER:** I think I have struck a nerve. If I can get back to it, we know that direct funding will be provided.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** You do not like hearing it. Direct funding will be provided from the National Disability Insurance Agency. We know that.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Order! Member for Mudgeeraba, your interjections are not being taken.

**Mr HARPER:** I would also like to commend the Premier and our Minister for Disability Services for their commitment to signing the bilateral agreement. The Premier knows just how important this is to the people of Queensland. The NDIS will support more than 90,000 people with disability, doubling the number of people currently receiving disability services. I agree with Minister O'Rourke who is calling for Malcolm Turnbull to sign the bilateral agreement and provide certainty for those people.

Importantly, through the transition period people do not need to stress as the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services will continue to fund disability services for those clients who have not yet entered the NDIS scheme. An important issue for the NDIS transition relates to the funding arrangements and reconciliation processes that will occur throughout the transition period. Importantly, the objectives of the bill are to ensure Queenslanders who are receiving disability support under the NDIS have the same level of safeguards as Queenslanders who are in receipt of disability support as funded by the department.

The Queensland government is working closely with the Commonwealth government to get that bilateral agreement signed and working with local communities and the disability sector to ensure a smooth and carefully managed transition to the NDIS. There are just 108 days to go until the NDIS starts in Queensland. Providing the correct services for people with disability is vital. We need to ensure that we get the legislation and policy checks and balances right and correct before the implementation of the NDIS statewide. I know that the Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland is incredibly in touch with and proud of the work people do in the area of service provision for the broad disability sector in Queensland. I know that the minister is proud of the fact that the NDIS will create some 13,000 jobs in Queensland. Given the minister's other portfolio as the minister representing the Premier in North Queensland, job creation is an important and key element of the rollout of the NDIS in Queensland. I also commend the minister's work in this space. I have joined the minister several times in Thuringowa and Townsville visiting CPL—Choice, Passion, Life—in Kirwan and Cootharinga Disability Services. From listening to the minister engaging with mums and dads or people with disability I know that we have a genuine minister, one who cares about people. The work of rolling out the early launch of NDIS in Townsville, Palm Island and Charters Towers from January 2016 was a very proud moment for the minister and her team in achieving this important initiative that puts people first.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services is leading a whole-of-government review into the Queensland legislation. That review is being completed in two stages. In stage 1 all relevant government agencies are required to identify amendments in their portfolio that are critical and essential to enable and support early launch and transition. It also involves the review of legislation to facilitate the commencement of the early launch from 1 April 2016. Stage 2 will address the necessary amendments to enable the full scheme rollout from 1 July 2019.

Broad consultation was conducted across all relevant government departments as well as the State Coroner and relevant statutory advocates, including the Office of the Public Guardian and Office of the Public Advocate. Further, the approach adopted by Queensland in the bill is broadly consistent with other jurisdictions. However, given that the quality and safeguard systems in each jurisdiction operate differently, each state and territory is required to adopt an individualised approach. When one examines the bill one will see that within the 62 clauses there are particular amendments to the following: the Guardianship and Administration Act 2000, the Powers of Attorney Act 1998, the Public Guardian Regulation 2014 and, importantly, the Working With Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000. These amendments are important for ensuring the safety of all in relation to the rollout of the NDIS. In closing, we need to do all we can to ensure Queenslanders with disability are safe. Ensuring that they can uphold their rights is a matter of obvious importance for our government. I know the minister and her department are committed to ensuring and improving the lives of Queenslanders and maximising the opportunities the NDIS will offer to thousands of Queenslanders.

I acknowledge the previous committee's work, from its members to the secretariat. Whilst we only recently received the bill we, under the good work of our chair, will continue to carry on the outstanding good work of the previous committee and the extensive professional work of all in the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. I commend the bill to the House.