




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (5.02 pm): I rise in support of the Disability Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I start by thanking the previous committee—they did by far the majority of the work on this bill—and I also acknowledge the hard work of the minister. I know her commitment in this area. It was certainly evident and on display last year when we had the opportunity to go down to the mall together for the All Ability Rowing Challenge. It was certainly a challenge for me.

It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak in relation to any bill that relates to the NDIS. I believe it is an economic reform that our entire nation will be proud of in years to come, ranking up there with Medicare, the universal healthcare system and universal superannuation. It builds on the tradition of solving significant issues in our community in a way that empowers individuals and shares responsibility across our society.

From the perspective of an economist, this is an exciting and intriguing paradigm shift—something that is often theorised about but seldom enacted. It is now being enacted, and that is a good thing. Fundamental to market efficiency is the capacity for individual consumers to drive consumption decisions, and that is at the core of the NDIS. This should, in theory, lead to consumers obtaining the services they believe they need to meet their physical and emotional needs, which will ultimately help people with disabilities to become full participants in society in every respect: family, community, work, sports, arts, science and technology. This change should also drive organisations to become more efficient. While that is exciting from an economic perspective, the most important change this will really bring is the empowerment of people with a disability, creating the capacity for self-determination and the dignity that this brings.

I think of the great work being done in our community by organisations that support, educate, develop, advocate for and ultimately empower people with disabilities. Organisations like the Nursery Road State Special School, that start the education journey for young people with disabilities, Vision Australia, Queensland Narrating Service and Carers Queensland all provide valuable services to people with a disability as they move throughout life; specialist organisations like the MND and Me Foundation provide people with support as they deal with a very specific type of disability and TAG 5, an organisation that focuses on sport and recreation for people with disabilities. The NDIS will assist these organisations to work with people with disabilities and their families to achieve full community participation and empowerment. I think of the great work being done not for money but solely for love by families like the Dennis and the Marler families or the Stanley family—people who have made, and continue to make, great sacrifices to support a relative with a disability to live a life of dignity and meaning. I think about a young lady in my electorate who I have met many times now named Angela. I have met and got to know her much better thanks in large part to the power of technology that has enabled us to communicate. Angela has a physical disability but, much more importantly, she has almost completed a degree in social work, lives in her own house and cares for her lovely pet dog.

The NDIS is so much more than just an economic exercise: it will make a real difference to these people and the organisations in my community. But with change and opportunity come risk. We will be asking people who often have had little opportunity to make decisions to move into a situation where they have to make those decisions. Inevitably the capacity for individuals to make choices about who provides services will attract new providers into the market. We have seen some of the pitfalls that can bring in recent history in other areas such as VET education and childcare services, where we have seen overservicing and rent-seeking behaviour. These issues pose a great risk for consumers, so it is fundamentally important that we get this right. This bill recognises that the way we regulate organisations that provide services to people with a disability will need to change as the NDIS drives a change in the way that services are provided. The bill provides for a smooth transition as the NDIS is introduced, ensuring that people with a disability will receive high-quality services by allowing for monitoring of all service providers to ensure that the operators use existing safeguards.

There are also amendments that ensure that adult community visitors have the capacity to play an important role in supporting and advocating for people with disabilities. Like anyone who has worked with people with disabilities and in caring professions in other capacities, I would hope that a death in care is extremely rare, but it does happen and when it does occur it must be properly investigated. This bill ensures that the coroner can continue this important work as the NDIS is rolled out.

At its core the NDIS is an initiative that has been driven by people with a disability, their families, the organisations that support them and the broader community as a change that will allow people with a disability to become full participants in our community. This will bring not only dignity to the individual but will allow those individuals to make great contributions and bring great benefits to our community. Just as we have seen that waves of immigrants bring significant benefits and change to our society, empowering people with disabilities to become full participants in our society will bring immense benefits that we can only dream of at this point. We must get the NDIS right to achieve these benefits for those individuals and for our entire community, and this bill is a fundamentally important part of that process. I commend the bill to the House.