




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2016

NATIONAL INJURY INSURANCE SCHEME (QUEENSLAND) BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.44 pm): I rise in support of the National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Bill 2016. I would like to begin on this National Sorry Day by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. The committee chair and the members are to be congratulated on this report, and I take the opportunity to thank those who took the time to make submissions.

I have cared for many people following catastrophic road accidents, and I must admit that in this role my focus was on assisting those who had lost limbs, sustained burns or brain injuries or who had lost their vision, and my focus was on helping them to regain function and independence. Anyone at any time can be affected by a catastrophic motor vehicle accident. The impacts are devastating and generally long lasting, not just in terms of the physical impacts but also in terms of the impacts on your family, your relationships and, importantly, your finances. While I was caring for people in this situation I gave little thought to the complexities of our insurance system, but I can say that for many of the people I cared for a lifetime of ongoing care and support was a very real prospect.

What I did think about was the worry and the anguish that affects whole families when they are faced with a loved one whose injuries mean significant financial loss at a time when the family needs to find resources to fund ongoing care. This bill provides certainty for people in the immediate aftermath of catastrophic injuries, and that is why I am supporting this bill. The bill provides a safety net for all people, no matter their situation. We will remove worries about finances and allow people and their families to focus on rehabilitation. In my experience, many of the people who are affected by catastrophic motor vehicle accidents are younger, and with the right support these people will not only regain their basic functions but many will return to employment and contributing to their families and their community in many different ways. But they do need that support, and it takes resources to provide that support.

While caring for people who are recovering from trauma we strive to help the person gain dignity, independence and control. This bill recognises the independence of people and allows them to make a dignified decision about whether they want to pursue an alternative path to secure their economic future and future care needs. This bill facilitates this and puts the person at the centre of that decision making about their future; importantly, it puts many safeguards in place to protect individuals during this decision-making process.

With this bill Queensland is plotting a different path to the other states in our approach to dealing with this very complex issue. The Treasurer is to be congratulated for working with the committee and the Motor Accident Insurance Commission, which will see a net additional cost to CTP of just \$32 per vehicle. In my opinion, Queenslanders will welcome the fact that this is much lower than originally predicted. More importantly, they will welcome the creation of a system that provides safeguards for all people affected by catastrophic motor vehicles. They will also welcome the fact that this system

provides dignity and choice for individuals. At a time when these people have often lost so much in their life and they face such a period of uncertainty, respecting their dignity and providing them with choice is something that I think is significant and I have seen that in action myself.

Those opposite may want to make mischief over this, but I keep in mind those people who need this scheme. They are real people for me and I can see their faces, their families, their injuries and their struggles to recover. These are people who have enough issues to focus on, and this bill will allow them to focus on recovery and rehabilitation. I commend this bill to the House.