




Speech By  
**Julieanne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2016

**DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (7.37 pm): I rise to add to the debate on the Disability Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The National Disability Insurance Scheme, commonly known as the NDIS, is a new way of providing support to people with a disability. The bill will ensure that Queenslanders who receive disability supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme will have the same level of safeguards as Queenslanders in receipt of disability supports funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, known as DCCSDS.

Last year I reported to the House about a group of adults with disabilities working as supported workers at the Mackay Endeavour workshop. One of these adults is my neighbour Johnny. This group of workers face barriers many of us would struggle to comprehend embracing new challenges, learning new skills and jumping over new hurdles. Despite all the challenges life has thrown at them, they work with a sense of pride. This is how they want to live their lives, having opportunities to embrace life and extend themselves. They are all looking forward to the possibilities the NDIS rollout will bring to them, but they and their parents and carers are also apprehensive of the responsibilities the NDIS will bring.

As the NDIS rolls out, the DCCSDS funding contracts with disability services providers will be phased out and the NDIS participants will purchase support directly from providers. The loss of a funding link between the DCCSDS and the provider would mean that many legislative safeguards would be lost. The amendments to the Disability Services Act 2006 are necessary to redefine its scope so that it extends to the providers of disability support that are not funded by the DCCSDS.

The excited adults, their parents and carers need to have legislation in place that will protect them in this new world of choice. I have also had contact with parents of young children with disabilities. Like all parents, they have aspirations for their children and are looking forward to engaging in services that will meet the individual needs of their children. The question I often get asked by parents and carers is, 'What if we get it wrong? What if the provider does not live up to expectations?' That is why we need to have this legislative change. The choice that the NDIS will bring is welcomed by the parent groups, but we also need to make sure that we look after them so that they have the support that they need. They feel apprehensive because they do not have the benefit of a trial site that people in other states around the country had. There are possible pitfalls and uncertainties with any new scheme. That is why these safeguards are necessary for the clients of the NDIS.

The amendments prevent the creation of a two-tiered system where people with disabilities have divergent safeguards in place as a result of the funding source of their supports. The amendments to the DSA are also required to facilitate monitoring and compliance of NDIS non-government disability service providers with existing safeguards.

The amendments to the Public Guardian Regulation 2014 permit an adult community visitor to visit an NDIS participant with impaired capability residing in supported accommodation. Another critical

issue relates to the funding arrangements and financial reconciliation processes throughout the transition period. An amendment to the DSA will provide the DCCSDS with the authority to request identifiable client information from other agencies for the purpose of reconciliation against invoices.

Johnny, my neighbour, was born with his disability. There are other adults in his workplace with disabilities that were acquired through illness, such as strokes, or through accidents. The outstanding thing that they have in common is not their disability; it is their zest to participate in a meaningful life. This bill will give this vulnerable group of citizens who are living in our neighbourhoods safeguards to manage the NDIS, which has the potential to let them reach their goals. I commend the bill to the House.