




Speech By
Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2016

NATIONAL INJURY INSURANCE SCHEME (QUEENSLAND) BILL

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (3.57 pm): I rise to speak in support of the National Injury Insurance Scheme (Queensland) Bill 2016. The NIIS will transform the way that catastrophically injured persons are dealt with in Queensland from 1 July 2016 forever. This scheme is designed to sit alongside the National Disability Insurance Scheme and will ensure that at least minimum benchmarks of treatment, care and support are delivered to those catastrophically injured in a motor vehicle accident. This is an important and significant reform that will help to bring Queensland into line with other states.

Let us reflect. In 2013 the then LNP government signed onto a heads of agreement with the Commonwealth to implement an NIIS in Queensland for motor vehicles by 1 July 2016. In May way back in 2013, Campbell Newman signed onto the benchmarks and the then treasurer Tim Nicholls was responsible for its implementation. 2013 rolls over, 2014 rolls over, 2015 comes with a snap election and we find ourselves in a position of having to race against the clock due to the inaction of the LNP and the member for Clayfield. In 2015 the member for Mulgrave brought into this place the commitments Queensland had made and charged us as representatives, through the vehicle of the committee system, to make a decision on what we saw as the best model to implement, taking into account a multitude of factors.

I want it on the public record that similar behaviours of inaction were demonstrated by the five opposition committee members who churned through the committee process. The LNP changed the deputy chair three times. The LNP limited continuity through the committee process. There was no transfer of any intelligence and always—just as we saw late last night and well into this morning with the North Stradbroke Island bill—money was prioritised before people by those opposite.

We saw total inaction in decision making from the LNP at every turn. There was hesitation from the members opposite to even fulfil the obligations they were charged with and inaction and fear of even proposing an increase to rego costs. Through the inquiry process they failed to put a position. Here now in the bill phase they want to go back and say, 'Guess what? We think the government has it wrong. We now want the model that we can disagree with.'

Queenslanders deserve better. For those injured where fault can be established, people do have a right to take legal action and to seek compensation. The NIIS is our safety net, and safety nets should never come at the cost of reduction of longstanding legal rights. Queensland's CTP scheme works well: it is stable and affordable, and interference with that stability and the rights within it is something we have not done. That is something I am proud of.

The introduction of the NIIS will seek to address a gap by providing coverage for those injured where fault cannot be established whilst also preserving the legal rights of those who can prove fault. It is critically important for this implementation that we get the balance right in levelling up coverage for those injured in accidents without fault whilst also protecting the legal rights of those injured where fault can be established. This is a matter that I have been particularly vocal about and I want to acknowledge the work done by the Treasurer—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Linard): Members on my left, the member is not taking your interjections. I ask that you let her speak.

Ms BOYD: Maybe next time. I want to acknowledge the work done by the Treasurer to get the balance right. A hybrid model is one that has the full support of government members because it seeks to level up coverage whilst protecting existing rights and, when the NIIS and the NDIS underpinning principle is all about choice and control, this is the best and in reality the only way to achieve it in my view.

I want to commend the Treasurer on his commitment to be able to deliver these principles in a way that gets the balance right but at a competitive price point and at a modest cost, particularly when looked at comparatively with other state schemes. The LNP signed up to this federal Labor initiative, and only a Labor government in Queensland has the courage to give it life. It was going to cost Queenslanders more, but we have brought the cost down to a more realistic point and the cost will be lower than what our predecessors had contemplated—and much lower than any other state.

Sixty cents a week is a small cost to cover massive injuries. Sixty cents a week is a small price to pay for lifetime care and support for our family, friends and neighbours who may be catastrophically injured from the moment of the accident. Further, a hybrid model is critically important from an economic perspective. Only this model will preserve choice and dignity for those people who can prove fault and choose to opt out of the NIIS and access lump sum compensation.

Maintaining existing rights—by continuing to allow those people who can prove fault the ability to make their own decisions about the type of care and equipment they require for their ongoing care—is important to us on this side of the House. It is what we value. A hybrid model will allow those people who are able to demonstrate fault the ability to seek a lump sum payment for their care and equipment with proper safeguards in place—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, the member is not taking your interjections and they are not adding anything to the debate. I ask that you leave the member for Pine Rivers to be heard in silence.

Ms BOYD:—meaning they are no longer reliant on the scheme to manage their ongoing care. A key consideration for the committee was the ability for participants who suffer catastrophic injuries to access needs based housing or transport. It was very obvious to me that this is a key consideration for people in their transition from the health system to their homes—their transition to their future, the best future that they and their families can create. A lump sum payment allows for people to retain the right to choice and dignity in being able to make their own decisions about their care needs to have the best quality of life. This is critically important for those in rural and regional Queensland. In those areas, services are harder to obtain and flexibility is critical.

We recognise that government-run schemes cannot be the panacea for all problems and that the dignity and self-determination which flows from choice will foster better quality of life and enhanced independence for participants. The LNP also know, or should know, that the scheme that is being debated this week is proposed to be rolled out at a significantly lower cost compared to other states. Unfortunately, we know that the LNP do not value the rights of injured people. We saw them do it to our state's workers compensation scheme when they were last in government, when they ripped the guts out of it—when they introduced unfair injury thresholds that slashed rights for injured workers.

We urge them to not continue to make the mistakes of the past. If the LNP are fair dinkum, they would support the hybrid model in ensuring Queenslanders have access to the best NIIS in the country that provides choice and dignity and is economically strong—which retains rights, which closes a gap in coverage and appropriately supports people who are catastrophically injured in ensuring their lifetime care and equipment needs are met. This is good legislation that gets the balance right—choice, flexibility, independence, rights. I commend the bill to the House.