




Speech By
Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2019

DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (NDIS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (3.18 pm): I rise to speak to the Disability Services and Other Legislation (NDIS) Amendment Bill 2019. The bill aims to ensure that Queensland is prepared for the commencement of the NDIS commission from July next month. The bill also seeks to align existing disability related legislation so it operates in conjunction with Commonwealth legislation, particularly in relation to the authorisation of restrictive practices and worker screening. The bill also amends the Coroners Act to ensure that the deaths of certain NDIS participants are reported to the State Coroner.

In my brief contribution today I will address some aspects of the bill that are of concern to my constituents. I note that the opposition will not oppose the bill and acknowledge the amendments to be moved by the minister during consideration in detail. I also acknowledge the bipartisan support that the NDIS has at both state and federal levels.

The NDIS is an important initiative. Given the demographic of my electorate of Buderim, the NDIS is often cause for inquiry and at times concern among my constituents. The first obligation of governments at all levels is to protect and support the vulnerable. It is essential that all Queenslanders living with a disability are supported. It is essential that the transition from a state based approach to a national approach is better managed than it has been to date. In May 2018 the Queensland Audit Office reported on how effectively the Queensland government is managing the transition to the NDIS and how well prepared it is to oversee the delivery of services to the disabled. The report noted—

Current gaps in processes for managing and monitoring readiness of state government agencies and the NDIA have increased the risk for Queensland's final stage of transition.

The report further stated—

Despite signing the agreement later than five other jurisdictions ... Queensland agreed to an aggressive rollout schedule to keep the same completion date.

It is clear that Labor is mismanaging the transition to the NDIS, and it is the most vulnerable in our community who are paying the price. Why is Labor disregarding the vulnerable in this case? Why has Queensland Labor abrogated its responsibility to ensure that the NDIS transition is managed and does not result in a lack of support to those who need it most?

Over recent months I have been approached by numerous members of my electorate concerned over proposed changes to the Taxi Subsidy Scheme. An elderly 81-year-old woman, the carer of her disabled daughter, was understandably very upset at being faced with the prospect of her disabled daughter losing access to lower taxi fares. This would have resulted in my elderly constituent having to drive her disabled daughter long distances and to unfamiliar destinations—something that would have impacted her standard of living and that of her family considerably.

I believe that disabled members of our community should be provided with support to access transport. My LNP colleagues and I, along with 13 community organisations, were concerned over this increasing angst in our community and asked the government to extend funding of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme. I am pleased that all disabled Queenslanders, including NDIS scheme participants, can

continue to access the Taxi Subsidy Scheme for the next year. Unfortunately, the government's delay in making this decision resulted in distress to an estimated 10,000 Queenslanders that could have been avoided.

Under Queensland's bilateral agreement for transition to the NDIS, Queensland is required to continue existing quality and safeguards during the transition. The Queensland Labor government is not upholding its end of the bargain in this regard. During the committee process, concerns were raised in relation to the narrowing of the definition of when a death is considered a death in care, as we have just heard from the member for Maroochydore. All deaths of persons with a disability in aged-care facilities should be covered, particularly having regard to the significant number of young people with a disability who live in aged-care facilities, whose primary disability supports are often overlooked and not met.

This government needs to step up and pull its weight. It is not good enough for the state government to abrogate its responsibility in relation to the provision of support to the disabled. It is vital that Queenslanders living with a disability are supported so that they can live a productive and fulfilling life. This legislation is an important step in ensuring that such Queenslanders are not disadvantaged as a result of the transition to the NDIS.