




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 11 June 2019

DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (NDIS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (12.18 pm): The Palaszczuk government wants to ensure that Queensland is a place where people with disability have equal access to opportunities and can contribute to and participate in all that our beautiful state has to offer. This bill will support Queensland's next step in transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Since 2016 Queensland has been a host jurisdiction under the NDIS Act 2013, which supports the gradual transition of Queenslanders into the NDIS. The Queensland government is committed to ensuring a smooth transition to full scheme operation of the NDIS. We are also committed to ensuring that Queenslanders with disability continue to receive disability services that are subject to a robust quality and safeguards framework. This bill is the next stage of reform to support Queensland's full scheme implementation of the NDIS in Queensland.

In rising today to speak to this bill I want to highlight the underspends, staffing caps, excessive paperwork and a 'plague of contractors' that have undermined the effectiveness and original design of the NDIS. This great national enterprise cannot be capped, cut or delayed or put at the mercy of consultants who know the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

It is a great relief to me, to members of the community with a disability and to their carers that the Palaszczuk government stepped in to ensure that the Taxi Subsidy Scheme for NDIS participants continues over the coming year. A further \$6 million has been committed in 2019-20 to continue the subsidy payment. Taxi subsidies were expected to transition to the NDIS funding arrangement by now, but under the Morrison government this has not happened. We will not allow thousands of Queenslanders to be left stranded, so we have stepped in to ensure this does not happen. We want to ensure that people with special needs continue to receive this support so they can undertake everyday activities and stay connected with family and friends.

The Palaszczuk government understands how important it is for all Queenslanders to have access to transport. Queensland has already invested significant amounts under the NDIS funding arrangement, and Canberra must fix the gaps. We will continue to work over the coming year to ensure the NDIS agreement delivers proper affordable transport options for Queenslanders in the longer term. The Taxi Subsidy Scheme provides a co-contribution of up to \$25 per trip for people with severe disabilities who are unable to use other forms of subsidised passenger transport. The budget commitment continues the same level of investment in the TSS as in 2018-19. This is in addition to \$15.7 million to continue the TSS for non-NDIS eligible members.

Scott Morrison and the LNP need to meet their responsibilities under the NDIS, including providing proper support for participants. The Palaszczuk government will also allocate \$6.8 million in 2019-20 to continue incentive payments for drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis to give priority to TSS members. A lift payment of \$20 is provided to taxidriver for each eligible wheelchair accessible taxi trip involving transportation of a TSS member who is required to travel in a wheelchair.

The Palaszczuk government has been working closely with people with a disability and their representatives as well as the taxi industry and transport stakeholders. We have listened to the concerns of Queensland NDIS participants, their families and carers, disability advocacy organisations and transport providers. We have also strongly advocated on behalf of Queensland participants to resolve these issues with the NDIA and the federal government. However, disappointingly, these issues have not yet been resolved by the Morrison government. I call on the member for Capricornia and Minister Matthew Canavan to fund plans fairly for Central Queenslanders by providing adequate transport.

Following the passage of this bill, a second stage of legislative changes will progress further amendments to support the full scheme operation of the NDIS in Queensland, including legislative changes to ensure the Queensland government continues to champion access and inclusion for people with disability and support the implementation of nationally consistent NDIS worker screening in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.