




Speech By
David Janetzki

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (NDIS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (4.02 pm): I rise to offer my support to the Disability Services and Other Legislation (NDIS) Amendment Bill and the government's amendments to it. I acknowledge the efforts of our shadow minister in working on this bill and his engagement with the disability and communities sectors. This is a tribute to his efforts.

I am a strong supporter of the NDIS. As legislators and representatives of our communities, our responsibilities lie not simply with physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, dams; it is also for us to deeply consider and legislate on social infrastructure. I consider the NDIS one of most important pieces of social infrastructure in this nation. It is pleasing to see the bipartisan way in which it is being supported. I know what a difference it makes to many people in my community in Toowoomba. Shortly I will reflect on some of our contributors to the disability sector and relate some of the good news stories from the NDIS in the Toowoomba community. Firstly, I will refer briefly to a couple of points on the bill.

This is an appropriate time for there to be consistency across federal and state jurisdictions to ensure that there are no cracks. We know there have been lots of problems with the implementation of the NDIS and the overlap between the state and federal jurisdictions, problems with service delivery and problems with families seeking to get but falling short in receiving the support they so desperately need. Therefore, it is pleasing that we now have an opportunity to align the state and federal systems. This is a sensible next step in the rollout and delivery of the NDIS across Queensland.

Some members have commented on the Taxi Subsidy Scheme. I think it was the member for Gregory who spoke about the importance of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme to rural communities. He mentioned that he has 40 separate towns and principalities in his electorate. Toowoomba is not endowed with the greatest public transport system, which is one of the things that I continue to fight for. Therefore, it is very important to the people of Toowoomba that the Taxi Subsidy Scheme remains in place. It is pleasing to see that the Treasurer has now committed to that. A number of people came to my office to see me in relation to their concerns about the potential withdrawal of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme. It is pleasing that their pleadings have been listened to and that the Taxi Subsidy Scheme has been retained for an additional 12 months.

In this House we talk a lot about the vulnerable and the defenceless. I believe that worker screening checks are vitally important. It is appropriate that the bill and the amendments will align, wherever possible, the yellow card and blue card systems. That is supported by the opposition. I think it was the member for Nicklin who spoke about the vulnerability of many people in our communities. It is important that workers in the sector meet the highest standards, because we know what an extraordinarily difficult job they have. Across the disability and community services sectors, the volunteers and workers are among the finest people one could ever meet. My own brother works in the sector. I know how challenging and also deeply rewarding it can be to work in a system where you can make a real difference to people's lives. This is true, not just through the work that is done on a day-to-day basis but also through the opportunities that we in this place have to legislate for things such as are before us today.

We hear a lot of stories about the challenges and the difficulties with the NDIS, but I want to relate a couple of the positive stories from my electorate. I pay tribute to federal member for Groom and former member for Toowoomba South, John McVeigh, and acknowledge the coordination between his office and my office. The offices of all members of parliament receive many complaints and we need to work closely with the federal members of parliament. I note that John McVeigh's office has been very helpful in raising concerns with the NDIA locally to assist constituents and in helping me to deliver solutions. I can immediately think of one family in my neighbourhood that has a good outcome as a result of the representations made by the federal member.

I will relate a couple of positive stories, because often we speak about the negatives and I want to speak about some of the positives. We have an extraordinary community in Toowoomba, which I often speak about, and the disability sector is no different. Angus Hopkins, a nine-year-old boy who suffers from cerebral palsy, made the national news because tragically for a number of months his mother had to transport him around in a wheelbarrow as the NDIS had not furnished the family with a new wheelchair. The pleasing result is that the NDIS has come through with \$26,000 and the delivery of a new wheelchair will be made to Angus by July. I understand that Angus has spent some time with his favourite football team—I think it was the Broncos—and received a personal message from Kurt Fearnley. That is a good news story relating to the NDIS.

I reflect on Elise Grandson from Gowrie Junction, in your electorate, I believe, Mr Deputy Speaker Weir, who was one of the first people in Queensland to use the NDIS to fund a traineeship. We all know how much value a job is to our self-esteem. Those living with a disability are no different. One of the best things we can do for them is to give them opportunities for employment, training and engagement in the community. Elise has now completed her traineeship and is currently working at the USQ cafeteria. She has also been nominated for a Queensland Young Achiever Award. Congratulations to Elise.

Jeffrey Morrish, a Toowoomba man living with muscular dystrophy, has a new electric wheelchair. Again, it was funded by the NDIS. Jeffrey is a very keen soccer player and stands ready to make the Queensland team and potentially the national team. That is courtesy of his new wheelchair which was funded by the NDIS.

I recently had the good fortune to present Rachel Purdon, a Centenary Heights State High School student, with a certificate of completion of a skilling-up program undertaken through the Endeavour Foundation. This course work allowed Rachel to work on her CV, work on her interviewing skills and gain some work experience in a supported employment environment at the Endeavour Foundation, which is in my electorate of Toowoomba South. Rachel is a fine young woman. Given the opportunities through the Endeavour Foundation, Rachel is ready to make a real fist of employment and a real difference to the community in which she is living.

So many people in the Toowoomba community work with the NDIS to deliver great outcomes for people across the disability sector. I refer briefly to Kim Stokes. She is a wonderful advocate amongst the disability sector in Toowoomba. She took a bus load of people to Brisbane on Monday. I was unable to attend because I was here for budget week. She called it the bus ride of a lifetime. Her and a number of community leaders from Toowoomba, including councillors McDonald and Ramia, visited Help Enterprises in Brisbane which employs over 370 people in a supported employment environment. They are a great social enterprise. It goes to show what can be achieved amongst the community when employment services, the NDIS, great companies and great advocates work together.

Finally, I wanted to give a plug to the Toowoomba Business Disability Awards, which has been renamed the Business DisABILITY Awards of Australia, which I have spoken about before. There are so many amazing sponsors. Judy Antonio, the Toowoomba mayor's late wife, was the original patron of these awards. They are on in September. I encourage nominations from across the disability sector in Toowoomba which acknowledges so many of our great advocates and employees.