




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 11 June 2019

DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (NDIS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.38 pm): I am going to hear that speech many times this afternoon because those opposite are all reading off the same script. Sadly, I am only going to get to rebut it once, but let me start by rebutting that absolutely poorly read, half-believed load of nonsense that we just heard from the member for Gympie. I will start by dealing with one of the organisations mentioned, the Queensland Narrating Service. The member for Gympie would not know where it is and he would not know what it does. He would not know anything about that situation. Instead of coming in here and saying that those opposite are somehow supporting this bill, he has come in here and taken massive swipes at the government. Rather than being constructive, as those opposite said they were going to be, he has come in here and taken massive swipes at the government.

Let me set the record straight in relation to the Queensland Narrating Service—a great organisation based in my electorate across the road from my electorate office, an organisation that I have visited on many occasions, an organisation that I have used to read my newsletters on to digital formats so that the 10 per cent of people in my electorate who have low or no vision are able to get my materials and read those materials and use those materials, an organisation that is a fantastic organisation.

Who said no to this organisation? Was it the Palaszczuk Labor government? No. It was the NDIA and the NDIS—federal government agencies. I suggest to the member for Gympie that, instead of coming in here and being negative, he gets back to the substance of this bill. I was there—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Member for Greenslopes, could you speak through the chair, not argue across the chamber. Thank you.

Mr KELLY: I was there in an Every Australian Counts T-shirt. I waved the placards. We all know that I am a good placard waver. Why did I wave those placards? It was not because the NDIS is one of the most significant changes in the delivery of services that we are seeing across OECD countries. Throughout the world economists are watching what we are doing. This is a massive experiment. The reason I was out there waving placards, the reason anybody who has worked with people with disabilities is supporting this initiative, is that it is focused on empowering people with disability. At the heart of the NDIS, this is what it is about.

When I was younger, as a nurse I used to think that my job was just to go in there, provide health care and get people to the next stage. As I grew older and worked with people with disabilities—on a number of occasions I went back into nursing and then went back to working with people with disabilities—my understanding shifted. I realised that, as a carer, I was there to empower people. Whether they were in a hospital, or in a disability care situation, my job was to try to help them to get back in control of their life and to live the most meaningful life they could possibly live. That is why the NDIS is so important.

People who require care for any reason—whether that is because they are ill, they have a disability, they are aged, or for any other reason—will be in an inherent power imbalance in their relationship with a carer. This bill is crucial to the success of the NDIS. Of course, we want to empower people with disabilities, but people with disabilities will need help to get those services and receive help from people delivering those services. We have to have in place processes that make sure that we have quality and safe services. This bill certainly ensures a smooth transition to the NDIS.

The NDIS is a massive change. A significant amount of work is going on between the federal and state governments on these transitional processes. This bill makes sure that we have in place those good systems so that we can continue to receive complaints if problems occur, that we have systems to investigate and the powers to correct practices and deal with problems. This bill is good, because it does not just restrict itself to dealing with NDIS funded services; it looks at the gamut of services and care that is being provided to anybody with a disability no matter who is funding those services. I think that is a real strength of this bill.

I talked about the relationship and the work that is going on between the federal and state governments. I will come back to QNS. When it became obvious that QNS was not going to receive any funding from the federal government, I went to the minister's office. I can tell members that QNS is continuing to receive funding from the Palaszczuk Labor government. QNS is one of many organisations that, sadly, are not being funded by the federal government's NDIS scheme.

I am pleased to see that this bill maintains very strict guidelines on restrictive practices. Anybody who has ever had to participate in applying physical or chemical restraints to people will know what a gut-wrenching situation that is to go through. It is not something that anybody in a caring situation would want to be involved in if there were any other options. I am pleased that we will continue to have systems in place whereby, if a restrictive practice is needed for somebody with a disability, there are processes to oversight that and there is in place strict, positive behaviour support to make sure that a whole range of other things have been tried in advance before we move to that. In terms of maintaining the good-quality standards that we have in Queensland, I think this bill gets the mix right while we move to a more nationally consistent approach.

Having monitored and supervised both staff and volunteers in this sector, I think the screening process is also very important. It is important that we do anything we can do to make sure that people who show up to care for people with disabilities are there for the right reasons and have the best of intentions and that they have no criminal history that may be of relevance to caring for people. This bill gets that balance right.

We hear across so many sectors about the need for information sharing, domestic violence being one such area. We know that we live in an age when we have not only the information to share but also much greater capacity to link and integrate our systems. If we get that information-sharing system right, we can deliver a much better level of care to people.

If we are going to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices about the sorts of services that they receive, we will inherently have a risk where people will not necessarily get the quality services they are chasing. We have to make sure that, if things are not going the way they should, people with a disability, particularly those with an intellectual disability or mental health issues, have strong advocacy. This bill certainly addresses those issues. I would like to commend this bill to the House.