




Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**

**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2019

## **DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (NDIS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (4.45 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Disability Services and Other Legislation (NDIS) Amendment Bill. The LNP will not be opposing the bill. The committee made only one recommendation and that was that the bill be passed. The major objectives of the bill are: to ensure that Queensland has made all urgent and critical amendments required to support the commencement of the operation of the NDIS commission from 1 July 2019, which is not very far away; to ensure that the Disability Services Act 2006 operates in conjunction with the Commonwealth legislative framework to provide a strong quality and safeguards framework, in particular in relation to the authorisation of restrictive practices and worker screening; to strengthen the operation of Queensland's disability worker screening system—that is, the yellow card system—during the transition to new NDIS worker screening; and to enable appropriate information sharing to occur with the NDIS commission to assist with the performance of the NDIS commissioner's functions under the NDIS Act.

The bill is the necessary next step for Queensland and those with disabilities to transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is very important that a person with a disability living in Queensland is not made worse off because of the transition to the NDIS, and this legislation will assist in ensuring Queensland's accountability frameworks remain in place as the transition progresses.

It is unfortunate for those individuals with a disability living in Queensland that the Palaszczuk Labor government have put them at risk many times. During last year's budget estimates, it was disclosed that hundreds of NDIS letters had been sent to Queenslanders who had passed away. This was a traumatic time for the families of the deceased. It was also revealed that there had been two years of updates for the NDIS from cabinet. This led to two issues that have not been addressed by the Labor government during the transitioning period—one, people being at risk of homelessness due to being unable to secure NDIS or state funding in time and, two, services like the Queensland Narrating Service no longer being funded and at serious risk of closure.

On 30 June the Palaszczuk government decided to cut the Taxi Subsidy Scheme, making it the only state in Australia to do so. Other states were waiting until the equivalent of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme was in place and the process of transitioning had been completed successfully. This subsidy is vital for those with a disability which has left them in a wheelchair. At the last minute, the Treasurer extended the Taxi Subsidy Scheme for 12 months. However, this decision was only overturned after the LNP and 13 disability organisations successfully forced her hand and reversed this cold-hearted cut. An estimated 10,000 Queenslanders would have lost access to low taxi fares if the scheme had been axed on 30 June.

The Queensland Audit Office tabled a report in May last year on how effectively the government was managing the transition to NDIS and how its preparation was progressing to oversee services once the transition was completed. The report discovered that fewer than 60 per cent of all those eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme are likely to be in the program by the time the full rollout has been finished. Regardless of its preparedness, Queensland is committed to paying the full \$2 billion per

year for the NDIS rollout. There was a requirement that the NDIA was to have all local area coordinators in place six months prior to the rollout in different locations around the state. The report found that only one coordinator was in place.

The LNP government signed an agreement in May 2013 to implement the NDIS in Queensland. At this time an \$868 million commitment was made. In the 2014-15 Queensland budget the then LNP government committed \$1.46 billion to Disability Services even after inheriting an exceptionally underfunded Disability Services budget from the former Bligh Labor government.

The Condamine electorate has very few registered service providers, with most providers of the NDIS being located in Toowoomba, which is a considerable distance for many people with a disability in places like Brookstead, Nobby, Cambooya, Felton or Greenmount. Unless a carer has their own transport, which at times is not the case, this is going to be difficult for some. This is one of the reasons why so many people in the seat of Condamine were concerned with the proposed taxi subsidy cut. It would be my hope that many more service providers are found in the electorate to assist people with disabilities and those who care for them and their families as the NDIS is fully rolled out.