




Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**

**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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## **DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (WORKER SCREENING) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.33 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Disability Services and Other Legislation (Worker Screening) Amendment Bill 2020. The objectives of the bill are to support a nationally consistent worker screening framework for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Nationally Consistent Worker Screening for the NDIS. It will enable Queensland to operate a state disability worker screening system for certain disability services that it continues to fund or deliver outside of the jurisdiction of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. It will streamline and strengthen the legislative framework for disability worker screening in Queensland and ensure the blue card system operates effectively and efficiently alongside the disability worker screening system and the strongest possible safeguards are maintained in relation to persons working with children with disability.

The NDIS provides the necessary means for all Australians under the age of 65 who have permanent and significant disability with the support structure they need to enjoy an ordinary life, to achieve their goals, have greater independence, community involvement, employment and improved wellbeing. There is no doubt that NDIS provides the necessary steps to invest in people with disability early to improve their outcomes later in life. This is a service that requires support workers to provide the day-to-day tasks, such as household cleaning, assist with finding employment, participate in exercise and manage household budgets. It addresses the disadvantages faced by people with disability by bringing disability support into people's homes but, most importantly, it empowers and allows people with disability to engage and actively participate in everyday activities that we able-bodied people take for granted.

I want to commend all those wonderful people carrying out these important roles to provide the necessary support and quality of care to people with disability. Clearly this scheme would not work effectively without the right people in place to make it work. Sadly, we know that people with disability are at high risk of harm and prone to poor treatment, abuse, neglect and exploitation. There is absolutely no question about the type of people we want in these roles. We want only the right people to take care of our most vulnerable and this can only be achieved with strong processes in place and worker screening is an important part of making sure that we get the right people to do the right job every single time.

This key piece of legislative reform is absolutely necessary in that it will strengthen the disability screening processes in Queensland to protect the rights and liberty of people with disability. The bill provides a tighter scope that screening will be mandatory for workers of registered NDIS providers in risk assessed roles, including people working with children with disability; that there will be greater consistency of safeguards for children where people working children with disability will require both an NDIS clearance and a blue card. The application process will mean that application for NDIS clearance will be made by an individual worker through an online application process. Employers will still be required to verify they are proposing to engage the individual.

The bill also implements a no-card, no-start policy for applicants requiring screening to ensure people have a clearance before providing services to people with disability. The bill proposes a revised information sharing framework to enable the chief executive to request information from prescribed entities for the purpose of disability worker screening. It also provides for a state disability worker screening system to maintain current screening for disability services outside the jurisdiction of the NDIS commission and provides transitional arrangements for people who hold blue cards, yellow cards or yellow card exemptions on commencement or have pending applications for a blue card, yellow card or yellow card exemption where a decision has not been made.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): I apologise, member for Cook. I will need to interrupt you there and ask you to take a seat. Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House, and the time limit for this stage of this bill having expired, I call the minister to reply to the second reading debate.