



Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 February 2021

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme, Worker Screening**

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.46 am): The Palaszczuk government welcomes the recent changes that strengthen the safeguards for Queenslanders receiving support from the NDIS. At the beginning of this month, we welcomed new nationally consistent worker screening for around 90,000 Queenslanders living with disability.

Since commencing on 1 February, the no-card, no-start process has prevented 45 high-risk individuals in Queensland from working with people with disability. The new worker screening checks were part of national reforms to improve the overall safety and quality of services delivered through the NDIS. The changes mean that clearances and exclusions are recognised across all states and territories, including Queensland. Thorough and nationally consistent safeguards help ensure Queenslanders with disability are supported to achieve their full potential with their human rights respected.

The Palaszczuk government invests more than \$2 billion annually in the NDIS and recognises that people with disability have the right to live their lives free from abuse, violence, neglect or exploitation. Extensive resources are available to help Queenslanders understand the new system—it is incredibly important for all NDIS providers and workers to understand their obligations, including whether they need a clearance.

An example would be new employees of NDIS registered providers, including sole traders, who will need worker screening clearance before they commence work. Existing employees who hold a current yellow card can continue working and will transition when their renewal falls due or if there is a change in their criminal history.

The streamlined online worker screening process and detailed user guides have been developed by the department. We are constantly learning about what Queensland's \$2 billion investment in the NDIS is delivering and what more can be done.

Last week I travelled to the Sunshine Coast and visited three very different but equally significant disability service providers. I thank the member for Noosa for joining me to visit disability support provider Sunshine Butterflies. Ms Leanne Walsh, founder and chief executive officer, showed us around the grounds, which were teeming with natural beauty and farm animals. I was able to see people enjoying karaoke and heard all about their woodworking and other activities. It was clear that Sunshine Butterflies is a place where people with disability are able to participate in activities that bring them joy and a feeling of connection with others and nature.

I also visited specialist disability accommodation operated by the Wesley Mission, where it was evident that the needs of the people who live there have been carefully thought through and planned for. The Palaszczuk government proudly granted \$1 million for the construction of this specialist disability accommodation, and it has been providing people with disability the opportunity to have

supported independent living ever since. Wesley Care Maroochydore accommodates five residents in the share house and nine residents in individual apartments. Each resident is able to decorate their apartment, with the guys obviously showing their passion for sport. The ladies' apartments were also decorated to suit their personalities and reflect their own passions.

The staff and clients made my day. It was awesome to meet Cameron, who lives in his own unit, and see his impressive collection of Holden memorabilia. But not for too long, because he had to go down the street and buy groceries. I met Glen, who was enjoying a relaxing morning. Most impressively I met Shaun, who competed in Canada at the Calgary Winter Olympics as a downhill skier and got to meet Eddie the Eagle.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** I love that movie! He loves to get out on his bike alongside his carer to stay fit and healthy. He is also an expert at telling dad jokes. These conversations showed me the residents are exercising the choice and control that we always hoped the NDIS would deliver. I also want to thank the service providers whom I visited for their insights, advice and the ongoing work they do. It is so refreshing to visit facilities like this and see the hard work our Queenslanders do to keep others happy, healthy and safe.