




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Disability Advocacy Services, Funding

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (10.08 am): I rise to update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting all Queenslanders through disability advocacy support. In 2017 the Palaszczuk government committed to extending disability advocacy funding through to 30 June 2021 which was a two-year commitment valued at \$8.1 million. In 2019-20 this funding was bolstered by a one-off additional allocation to support regional advocacy services to address additional demand arising during the NDIS transition and subsequently during COVID-19.

With Queensland's economic recovery underway, this investment results in jobs and economic stability for people with a disability and those working in the sector. Between 1 July 2019 and 31 December 2020, advocacy funding provided by the Palaszczuk government funded advocacy organisations to deliver more than 34,000 hours of support to more than 3,400 people with disability. Queensland is leading the way when it comes to job creation and we are able to deliver Queensland's plan for economic recovery because the Palaszczuk government is united while those opposite are divided.

Today I am pleased to advise that the Queensland government is supportive of extending the base funding for disability advocacy services by a further two years to support this vital sector. We work every day to ensure that all Queenslanders with disability, no matter where they live, have access to the support they deserve. One of our key priorities is building inclusive communities for all ages, abilities and backgrounds. The demand for advocacy services has persisted despite Queensland's transition to the NDIS. The NDIS has been a major driver of advocacy demand. We all know advocacy is a vital support for people, including people with disability.

Just last month I met with representatives from the Combined Advocacy Groups of Queensland to discuss disability advocacy needs in Queensland. I will continue to meet with disability advocacy groups. A new National Disability Strategy is due to be released later this year and I am eager to see that as it will inform our own revised State Disability Plan. The underpinning systemic issues, including disability advocacy, are yet to be addressed federally and will likely take a significant period of time to fully resolve.

Commonwealth action on the findings and recommendations of the various reviews of the NDIS is in the early stages. We will be extending our support through our existing arrangements while we work with the federal government, which is leading a demand and gap analysis of independent disability advocacy and decision-making supports. Findings of this work will strongly inform discussions on future arrangements for funding. My department will now work to ensure that funding is allocated to support the areas of greatest demand across the state. I look forward to working with Queenslanders with Disability Network and the Queensland Disability Advocacy Alliance to continue to support the special needs of vulnerable groups of Queenslanders with a disability.