




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Office of the Public Advocate, Report

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing) (10.03 am): *'Safe, secure and affordable'*?—that is the title of the Public Advocate's report tabled this morning and what the Palaszczuk government expects for our state's most vulnerable citizens. In Queensland, level 3 residential services provide accommodation, personal care and often food services. A significant number of people living in these settings have complex support needs coupled with impaired decision-making. It is not lost on me that if my own brother did not have my mum or me, he may very well have had to rely on one of these services. Ensuring that those most vulnerable in our community are given opportunities and are supported is one of the reasons I got involved in politics, and as housing minister I take my responsibility to deliver for those people very seriously.

The Public Advocate's report handed to government makes one recommendation, and that is that the Queensland parliament should conduct an inquiry into the provision and regulation of supported accommodation in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government accepts this recommendation and will soon refer this inquiry to the Community Support and Services Committee. This is an opportunity to shine a light on this industry and listen to the voices of residents, which will help inform a review of the Residential Services (Accreditation) Act.

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and the NDIS review are currently examining issues directly related to people with disability and are likely to address supported accommodation. In Queensland, 46 level 3 residential services provide housing plus supports for more than 1,500 people living with a disability, serious mental health concerns or issues related to drug and alcohol use. Those services are not run by government and often house very marginalised members of our community. The report looked at these services, their role in the broader housing and social care system and whether they are appropriately serving their purpose. It included input from a range of stakeholders including people with lived experience and their advocates. It asks two key questions. One, are the current residential services regulatory criteria appropriate and appropriately monitored? Two, is there sufficient regulatory oversight of interplay between multiple systems, particularly the state regulated residential services system and the federally regulated NDIS?

The Commonwealth government's Disability Royal Commission has highlighted some serious values from similar kinds of supported accommodation services in New South Wales. Over the past decade the NDIS has changed the lives of many Queenslanders for the better including my brother. However, the system is not perfect and bad behaviour by private institutions is sometimes unintentionally incentivised. It is right and timely to look at the way these systems interact. If there are any gaps or ways that we can improve, I want to know about it so we can act immediately.

It is important that we listen to the real experiences provided during the report process and during the inquiry to ensure that we have the right supports and legislative framework to protect some of the state's most marginalised citizens. As recommended in the report, we will seek to engage an

independent non-government organisation to support residents to contribute their views on the services and support they receive. I want to sincerely thank the Public Advocate for his work on this matter and his commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable Queenslanders and to thank all staff who assisted in the preparation of this report. I look forward to updating the House further.