



Speech By
Hon. Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Disability Services

 **Hon. AJ CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (2.37 pm): The Crisafulli government will stand up for Queenslanders with a disability and we will continue to hold the federal Albanese government to account—accountable for a program and a deal called Thriving Kids, which risks Queensland children and their families being worse off. We cannot allow it to get away with shirking its responsibility to Queensland children with low, mild or medium autism or development delay. We must do this and we must stand up for them and their families. Even if we are the last state to hold out to sign the bilateral agreement, we are prepared to take a stand, because we know that in its current form it is a bad deal for our state and a bad deal for children with a disability and for our vulnerable children and their families.

The crucial details are still lacking. We as a state are expected to sign a deal in good faith when right from the start the federal government outlined its lack of willingness to engage with disability ministers and denied us the important detail that we need to inform families of what they will face under the new Thriving Kids program. The federal government is not only keeping Queenslanders in the dark; it is treating state and territory disability ministers with disdain. The Albanese Labor government has not yet finalised a date to convene a crucial meeting with the states' disability ministers while it goes about making changes to NDIS rules.

There remain many questions about the cost-shifting deal, which is what it is—we call it out for what it is; that is exactly what the Albanese government is doing—is already having an impact on the lives of Queensland children and their families. It is where we see thousands of children who have low to medium autism or development delay currently either lose their funding during plan reviews or risk provider viability like we have seen reported in the media with the administration of AEIOU. I have real concern when I speak to families—particularly across rural and regional Queensland—about their inability to fund occupational therapy, speech therapy or the individual support they have come to rely upon under the NDIS provisions. This morning I spent time with Frances Scodellaro, the CEO of Autism Queensland, and Sarah Bone, the CEO of Down Syndrome and Intellectual Disability Queensland. I want to thank them for their time and continued advocacy and for providing that much needed support for families in such uncertain times.

There will also be flow-on effects to businesses right across this state that offer crucial programs for children with a disability. The anxiety of what this means, not just for those providers but for their clients, is very real. The federal government needs to be held accountable, and we will continue to do that. The Crisafulli government will continue to advocate on behalf of those who have been left voiceless by the federal government. We will call out this cost-shifting exercise for what it is.

While we continue to work with other states and territories with regard to NDIS rule changes, we understand the challenges that many face. What this means not only for children here and now but also for a generation of Queensland children who may come to learn through their families, through

diagnosis, that they have mild autism, medium autism or development delay is that they will be placed at risk, whether it be in the education system or whether they are then channelled through to the health system. That has dire consequences for these children and for our costs as a state with regard to the sustainability of our systems.