

Speech By

Hon. Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Budget, 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) (10.03 am): This evening, as the federal Treasurer hands down a budget and before a single dollar is announced, Queenslanders living with a disability will be sitting with anxiety and unanswered questions, and they deserve robust answers about the future of their supports. For months Queenslanders have waited for information to see how the federal Labor government is going to pull services and crucial funding and what it is going to do in terms of planned rollovers and planned cuts under the NDIS.

As the disability services minister, it is humbling to sit alongside people with lived experience and share with them their experience. After convening a round table recently, I heard nothing but frustration, anxiety and disappointment from those with lived experience, as well as from providers and disability advocates. Right now, confidence in the NDIS is being undermined by dodgy providers who are exploiting vulnerable Queenslanders and treating taxpayer money like a blank cheque. Every taxpayer dollar wasted to fraud or exploitation is a dollar taken away from a Queenslander in genuine need. The NDIS was created to support Queenslanders and Australians living with a disability to live fuller and more independent lives.

All states and territories agree and understand that the scheme must be sustainable; however, the reform, as a cost-shifting exercise, is one we do not support. Sustainability cannot come at the expense of participants and our most vulnerable, and it also should not mean that vulnerable children and families are left worse off.

The Crisafulli government supports genuine reform that strengthens the NDIS and protects those who rely upon it. Changes must start with ensuring taxpayer money reaches the Queenslanders it is intended to support, not shifting the responsibility to the states that have no systems in place nor a reasonable funding envelope to create them. Families deserve confidence that therapies and supports are being delivered ethically, properly and in the interests of their loved ones. These participants are children in need of early intervention, parents trying to navigate a complex system, young people seeking independence and families already carrying the enormous emotional and financial pressure due to cost of living under the Albanese government.

Ahead of tonight's federal budget, the Albanese government and Jim Chalmers have an opportunity to step up, to show leadership, to do the right thing and to explain how they intend to restore integrity and confidence in the NDIS. Unlike the way they have treated the states in the policy delivered via the Press Club, families are entitled to respect and timely answers.

Queenslanders deserve a scheme that is centred on the people it was designed to support. Cost shifting and neglect is not reform. The federal budget should deliver answers to a sustainable NDIS, not raise more questions and anxiety. We need answers as to how the federal government plans to make the NDIS sustainable.

To disability advocates and their families, rest assured the Crisafulli government will always stand up for those most vulnerable in our community and will ensure we take their voice to Canberra.