

Question on Notice

No. 930

Asked on 31 August 2004

MR MULHERIN asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (**MR PITT**) -

QUESTION:

With reference to the review of the *Disability Services Act 1992*—
What is this review considering?

ANSWER:

The review of the *Disability Services Act 1992* was an election commitment of this Government. Disability Services Queensland commenced the review in January 2002. My goal is to introduce legislation into Parliament to reform the Queensland disability services framework by November 2005.

Disability Services Queensland undertook extensive consultation between May and September 2003 (Phase 1 consultation). A total of 814 people took part in Phase 1 consultation. Twenty-four organisations, including Queensland Government agencies and peak disability groups, prepared written submissions.

There are two major goals of the legislative reform resulting from the *Disability Services Act 1992* review. The first is to update the human rights of people with disabilities that are currently enshrined in the *Disability Services Act 1992*. The second is to develop legislation to provide Queensland with an accountable funding and regulatory framework for the provision of specialist disability services.

The issues identified and then consulted on concern the coverage of the *Disability Services Act 1992*, safety of people with a disability, accountability and monitoring of disability services, and the legal recognition of assistance dogs.

The *Disability Services Act 1992* review will consider whether it is necessary to update the current definition of disability and the current legislative principles that relate to people with a disability. For example, a new principle may be contained in legislation to provide that people with a disability have the right to freedom from abuse and neglect.

The *Disability Services Act 1992* review is developing options to strengthen the current legislative regulatory framework to ensure that Disability Services Queensland can act effectively where there are allegations that a specialist disability service is providing a poor quality service or that a client has been abused or neglected while in the care of the service provider.

The *Disability Services Act 1992* review is considering whether there should be legislative recognition of assistance dogs so that people accompanied by assistance dogs have a legal right of access to public places.

I believe the review will result in an innovative reform package that will improve the provision of disability services to people with a disability, their families and carers.