

Question on Notice

No. 840

Asked on Wednesday, 24 May 2006

MS NELSON-CARR MP asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (**MR PITT**) -

How will the *Disability Services Act 2006* due for commencement on 1 July help promote the rights and well being of Queenslanders with a disability?

ANSWER:

People with a disability are at the centre of the *Disability Services Act 2006* (The Act). The objectives of the Act are to acknowledge the rights of people with a disability and to ensure that disability services funded by the department are safe, accountable and respond to the needs of people with a disability.

The Act acknowledges that people with a disability have the same human rights as other people in the community. In comparison to the existing legislation the Act increases its human rights emphasis by expanding the human rights principle to include the right of people with a disability to live lives free from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The Act also includes a series of rights to protect people with a disability when using disability services such as the right to have confidentiality of information respected and the right to receive services in a safe and accessible built environment appropriate to their needs.

The government recognises that most providers of disability services in Queensland are already committed to providing a quality service. The Act recognises that the Disability Quality System is about developing a culture of continuous improvement of quality systems. Together government and services providers can work collaboratively to deliver safe, accountable and quality services.

The right of people with a disability to safe and high quality services is stronger in the Act than in the present *Disability Services Act 1992*. The requirements relating to the pre-approval process and funding framework seek to ensure only professional services are given government funding.

Additionally, the Act ensures that there is continuous improvement of services, particularly through a strengthened regulatory framework which promotes good governance, transparency and proper accountability of public funds in order to protect service users and service funds.

The Act is also introducing a range of measures to help safeguard people with a disability including checking the criminal history of workers and volunteers of the services it funds. Greater monitoring and enforcement power will considerably increase government's capacity to investigate and take action where necessary.

I am confident that implementation of the Act will ensure the delivery of quality services to people with a disability while promoting and safeguarding their rights.