

MEDIA RELEASE – Western Downs disability service booted out of budget

Children in south-western Queensland have again been ignored despite huge funding for community services announced in Tuesday's State budget.

Plans by Dalby service provider Waminda Services Limited to expand its services received a body blow after being left out of the \$1.365 billion budget for the Department of Communities.

Significantly, of that just \$71.5 million goes to disability and community care services right across Queensland.

"Bloody typical," according to Waminda chief executive officer Stephen Hicks, who has been fighting for funding from Premier Anna Bligh and disabilities minister Anastacia Palaszczuk for the past two years.

"They will not see the high and growing need out here – despite their people acknowledging that our figures showing one school-aged child in 53 is diagnosed ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) are correct.

"We have a program, we have a plan, but will they help fund it? No way.

"This is another kick in the guts for people living in the bush, and if they live in an LNP electorate it's nigh on hopeless.

"What happened for government for all of the people of Queensland - of Australia - irrespective of the colour of the government of the day ... somebody should explain that to Anna and Kevin."

Waminda will now ramp up efforts to gain corporate and community support to keep their programs moving forward.

"It will be a hard slog, particularly with Mr Rudd ripping into the mining industry with his super tax," Mr Hicks said.

"Many of the big companies are likely to see the tax as removing their need to provide a social performance budget, so money that would have come to the community from companies operating in the region will now go to Canberra."

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