




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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DISABILITY SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION (NDIS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.12 pm): I rise to address the Disability Services and Other Legislation (NDIS) Amendment Bill 2019. In doing so I want to acknowledge the LNP's proud track record when it comes to supporting not only disability services but also, and more specifically, the NDIS. I was one of the cabinet ministers sitting around the table when the then LNP government signed an agreement on this—and this goes to show that state governments can work with federal governments of different persuasions—with the Gillard Labor government. Would it not be a change if those opposite stopped throwing their toys out of the cot and actually sat down and worked with the federal government of the day?

We signed an agreement with the Gillard government to implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Queensland. As part of that, we announced \$868 million as the first commitment to the implementation of the NDIS. In the 2014-15 budget there was funding of \$1.46 billion for disability services in Queensland—a record at that time and well and truly making up for years of underfunding by previous Labor governments.

The LNP got the ball rolling. It is great to see it continue to roll out. As others have said, sadly there have been instances where some of the hiccups that we anticipated have been magnified by the incompetence of those opposite. We have situations where individuals have fallen through the cracks. I will come to those in a moment.

As others have said, this bill is not only sensible, but necessary. It must be passed to allow Queensland to transition fully to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. All of us in this chamber, regardless of our politics, want to make sure this scheme works so that people with a disability actually have better outcomes than they have had after dealing with the state based Disability Services Queensland for many years. This has been proven to be the case in many instances for people across the electorate of Glass House.

I can talk of many instances where individuals are receiving far better service through the NDIS than they ever received through Disability Services Queensland. People who did not receive funding are now receiving funding. The fact that they are able to choose the care or the nature of the care they want is making a significant difference as well. I applaud the individual from the Toowoomba South electorate who has used their package to get a TAFE qualification. I know that that has been replicated in the Glass House electorate and around the state as well.

As we expected, there were some hiccups. Unfortunately, some of them have been quite significant given the state Labor government's inability to work with the Morrison federal government on some of these important issues. I want to spend a bit of time addressing one issue. In so doing, I acknowledge the efforts of the federal LNP members whom I work with in the electorate of Glass House—Andrew Wallace, the member for Fisher; Ted O'Brien, the member for Fairfax; and Senator James McGrath. More recently I have worked with, and I look forward to working with him for many

years to come, Terry Young, the new LNP member for Longman. It is great to welcome him and have Longman back in the LNP tent. I know we will get far better service out of Terry Young than that part of the world ever did out of the former member for Longman.

Prior to Terry's election, an individual from the Moreton Bay Regional Council part of the electorate of Glass House, Leif Lindblom, contacted me. This was at Christmas last year. Leif suffers from chronic pain and disability which forced him into early retirement. At the time, he was being told by everyone—Centrelink, Disability Services Queensland and the NDIA—that he was not eligible for anything. In frustration he reached out to my office and provided an extensive diary of his experiences, the pain that he was suffering and what it meant for him. He kept getting told by Centrelink that he was not eligible for the disability pension because he could still work, even if it were reduced hours. Leif's pain and medication meant that the doctors he was seeing were saying otherwise. He absolutely loved his former job. He was a painter. He would have loved to continue to do it, but he simply could not because of the chronic pain he was suffering.

Earlier this year I had a conversation with Senator James McGrath and we got to work. To be blunt, it has taken a bit of time. In May this year Centrelink wrote to Leif to advise him that he had been approved to receive the disability pension and that fortnightly payments would commence immediately. That was a great outcome for him. Even better, tomorrow Leif has an interview with the NDIS to see whether he can also receive funding through them.

Despite some of the challenges that this transition has raised, as members of parliament we have been able to achieve really significant outcomes for individuals like Leif, who not only now has a disability pension but also is sitting down with the NDIS tomorrow to see whether there are opportunities for him through that scheme. That is what this is about. This is about taking those individuals who, for whatever reason, are unable to continue to do or have never been able to do what we here can do, through pain or disability, and receive the funding they need to be able to access the services they require and they want to have a better quality of life.

I look forward to getting an update from Leif after his meeting with NDIS tomorrow, and hopefully that, too, will be a success. It is great and very rewarding as a local member to know that we can work with our constituents and with our federal colleagues to achieve these outcomes. In so doing, I want to again acknowledge the efforts of Senator James McGrath and his staff in assisting us with this one.

In the time remaining I, like others, want to touch on a number of NDIS providers in the electorate of Glass House. I want to start with Glasshouse Country Care based at Beerwah. It is a fantastic service that provides respite and day programs not only for people with a disability but also for our more senior citizens. They have also opened up their grounds to house a men's shed. That men's shed keeps growing and growing, and they work very well with them too. It is a great service based at Beerwah. To Ann and all of her staff, thank you for what you do. It was great at Easter to pop around with some Easter eggs and deliver them to the people who attend the day programs and to see the smiles on their faces from the services they are receiving from Glasshouse Country Care.

We have Lavally Lodge, which is run by Caloundra Catholic Homes Foundation, at the Glass House Mountains. It is a wonderful service. It flew under the radar a bit when the LNP was in government, but I want to acknowledge my former colleague the then member for Aspley, Tracy Davis, who was the then minister for communities and disability services. It was while Tracy was minister that Lavally Lodge received recurrent funding. A service that was fearful they would have to close down because they had been relying on the generosity of individuals on the Sunshine Coast for many years received recurrent funding and now continues to provide its wonderful service for people with disabilities in the Glass House area. It is always a pleasure to visit that place. You get inundated with hugs. They are always telling you jokes—some of them not always appropriate. It is great to see the smiles on their faces and again know that the service they are receiving is exceptional and making a huge difference in their lives.

Then we have Beaumont Care at Wamuran. You would be hard pressed to find a more beautiful setting for a disability service than the rural setting on Ziviani Road at Wamuran, surrounded by strawberry fields, trees and nature. It is a beautiful location, again providing a quality service to people with a disability. I thank each and every one of those services and the many others that provide outreach to the electorate of Glass House for what they do for those who are less fortunate than ourselves in terms of living with disabilities but knowing that through those services and through the work of the NDIS we are able to provide them with a better future.