




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2019

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Disability Services

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.09 pm): I rise on behalf of the many Queenslanders sidelined and forgotten about by the Palaszczuk Labor government. I speak of course about Queenslanders living with disabilities, Queenslanders being left behind by a Labor government that is either incompetent or malicious or both in the way that it treats many of Queensland's most vulnerable. This has been particularly obvious for Queenslanders living with severe disabilities and particularly those requiring 24/7 health care. We only need look at the debacle of how Queensland Health under the incompetent Labor Minister for Health handled the proposed closure of the Halwyn Centre to see just how little regard this Labor government has for actually consulting with those affected residents and families that Labor's callous decision would impact the most.

When the Metro North Hospital and Health Service originally told 38 Halwyn residents and their families that it planned to close the centre on 27 November 2018, it was done with almost no consultation. In fact, it was only after the then impending closure received significant media attention that the health minister decided to pay attention to the fact that he was forcing 38 Queenslanders with complex disabilities and health conditions out of the Halwyn Centre, a place that many residents only ever knew as home. I thank the Hon. Paul Fletcher MP, the federal Liberal-National Minister for Families and Social Services, for forcing the Queensland Labor government to work with the federal government to ensure that state Labor fulfils its responsibilities.

The Queensland Liberal National Party opposition continues to consult widely with organisations and individuals advocating for Queenslanders living with disabilities. A recent Liberal National Party sponsored petition called for changes to be made to Queensland's disability parking permits to include vision impairment and to bring Queensland into line with other states. Labor's Minister for Transport and Main Roads needs to ensure there are no review delays, inaction or inertia when reviewing this issue.

Further, the disability sector needs absolute certainty with respect to the taxi travel subsidy scheme. In question time today, Labor's disabilities minister appeared to indicate that the Palaszczuk Labor government has backflipped on its intended callous transport cut to vulnerable Queenslanders with disabilities; however, many disability organisations have heard nothing from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Such organisations remain very concerned in relation to the ongoing status of the taxi subsidy scheme in Queensland for those with disabilities and the impacts such a loss of the scheme would have on the social, economic, health and employment opportunities for Queenslanders living with disabilities. Other state jurisdictions are stepping up to the mark, other state jurisdictions are ensuring certainty, and the Palaszczuk Labor government should never play politics with the lives of Queenslanders with a disability. This Labor government in Queensland needs to do so much more when it comes to disability services and health.