

DISABILITYCARE

Motion

Resumed from 26 November 2014 on the following motion moved by Hon Alanna Clohesy —

That this Council condemns the Barnett government for its lack of leadership in the area of disability services and calls on the government to put people before politics and adequately and sustainably fund services and operate trials and evaluations in a transparent and accountable way.

HON ALANNA CLOHESY (East Metropolitan) [1.12 pm]: This motion is a great opportunity for members in this place to discuss the real situation for people with disabilities and their families in this state. We know that the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the NDIS My Way trials have commenced, and despite the fact that it was rolled out 12 months later than the rest of Australia, it seems to be rolling out quite successfully. That is based on the scant information we have thus far received about the success or otherwise of the trials; they are still relatively new, we are only in the second quarter and have only just received the first quarter report. On the basis of that report, all is going well, and that is good news. However, when something is apparently going really well but there is an absence of any real analysis, it leads us to be a little concerned about the level and type of information on the trials that is being made available. One would imagine that the implementation of any program of this size—not just the important ones, such as the NDIS My Way trials—would have some teething problems, yet the information we have received consists of a list of tables about the numbers of people accessing the services and the types of services they are identifying for themselves, and some very heartwarming stories about how this program has changed people's lives.

That is the public information we have received; however, we are also receiving information from people on the ground that everything is not as rosy as it seems. This debate will provide us with an opportunity to talk about these issues in a very real and transparent way, and to be open about the issues around the implementation of such a new and important program. We have to get this right. People's lives and quality of life depend on this program, and this motion provides a good opportunity to talk about that.

The second part of the motion is about those people who have been unable to access NDIS My Way sites. A lot of people are not receiving those services and will not receive them for a long time to come. The problem is that the government does not know how many people need to access the program. In fact, when I asked a question on this yesterday, the minister responded without identifying how many people were looking for, and waiting for, respite services. I encourage members to participate in this debate.

HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan — Minister for Mental Health) [1.15 pm]: I note that the honourable member ended her contribution not by asking people to vote on the motion, but merely to participate in the debate, and I think there is a very good reason for that. I will outline why that is a very good place for the opposition to end its contribution to this motion.

It would be very easy for me to amend this motion to something like “That this Council commends the Barnett government for its leadership in the area of disability services and applauds the government for putting people before politics, for adequately and sustainably funding services and operating trials and evaluations, and for being transparent and accountable”. Equally, it would be very easy for me to amend the motion—except that I do not think it would be acceptable—to “That this Council condemns the opposition for its lack of leadership in the area of disability services, for putting politics before people and for not supporting the need to manage the NDIS transition in a sustainable way —

Hon Stephen Dawson: You could do that, but it'd be wrong.

Hon HELEN MORTON: No, I could do it, but it would offend the standing orders of the Legislative Council, so I am very clear about that.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have heard a couple of members encouraging all other members to participate, but I just remind members that you cannot all do it at once.

Hon HELEN MORTON: It would be easy to amend this motion in some way, but it is so ridiculous that it is only worth voting down. It has already been amended once in the time since Hon Alanna Clohesy drafted it. She tried at the last minute to redraft it in some way so that it might serve some purpose, and I think there is some purpose in debating the motion, but I acknowledge, as she does, that it is not worth voting for and really should have been withdrawn at that stage. The motion is so ridiculous that it should just be voted down and thrown in the dustbin.

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I will outline the extent of the leadership shown by the Barnett government in the rollout of the NDIS, and I will also outline how people with a disability, their carers and family members, come first and foremost in all that the government has done with the NDIS. I will outline this government's unprecedented commitment to funding and sustainability in the NDIS, and I will show how transparent and accountable the trials and evaluations are. But before I get into that, I really do need to correct a couple of very silly notions that Hon Alanna Clohesy invented so that she could have something useful to say about this ridiculous motion that was amended so that she could still speak to it.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Only one member at a time has the right to speak, and that person is standing in her place, not sitting.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Can we pick someone else?

Hon HELEN MORTON: No, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, you have me!

Imagine even putting forward a motion titled DisabilityCare, when Australians with disabilities and their families voted that name down right from the start because of its patronising and condescending connotations for people with disabilities. That is an example of how wrong the Labor government was; people did not even like the name of the program, yet the honourable member persists in putting forward a motion with that as the title. How amazing that she would do that.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I know people get passionate about things and have the right to have their say, but we maintain order in this chamber so that we can have a rational debate when every member has the opportunity to put forward their point of view and every member also has the opportunity to listen to everyone else's point of view.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Thank you very much, Mr President. The term "Disability Australia" was referred to as patronising and demeaning to people with disability—in Australia, not just in Western Australia—but members opposite still wanted to put it forward. Even when they amended the rest of the motion, they could not amend the name in recognition of what the people of Australia were saying about that name.

Hon Alanna Clohesy interjected.

Hon HELEN MORTON: The other comment I heard members opposite say over and over again was, "Be speedy; just get on with it; be speedy; just sign up without knowing the full implications." I have heard something similar from —

Hon Alanna Clohesy: I didn't say "speedy" once; not once.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Minister, if you direct your comments through me in the chair, I will not interject, I can assure you.

Hon Ken Travers: Great self-restraint, Mr President!

Hon HELEN MORTON: Thank you very much, Mr President. If Hon Alanna Clohesy reads her speech, she will see the words I quoted.

Hon Alanna Clohesy interjected.

Hon HELEN MORTON: The comments I heard from the Leader of the Opposition right throughout the time the National Disability Insurance Scheme was being developed in Western Australia were, "Just sign up; get on with it and don't care about the implications of it for Western Australia."

Hon Sue Ellery: When did I say that? When did I say that I do not care?

Hon HELEN MORTON: All the time the government said that it was a —

Withdrawal of Remark

Hon SUE ELLERY: The point of order is, Mr President, I do not have the number of the standing order in front of me, but words have been attributed to me that I have never expressed in this place or publicly. The words attributed to me are that I said, "Don't worry about" —

Hon Helen Morton: "Get on with it; just sign up."

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon SUE ELLERY: The minister went on to say, if she will let me finish my point of order, "Don't worry about the implications", or words to the effect, of what it means for Western Australia. Never in this place or

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anywhere else have I expressed those words, and I ask the minister to withdraw the comment that those words are attributable to me because they are not.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I do not know whether the member said that or not. I do not know whether the minister making the remark has evidence of that or not, so I cannot prove that either way. It is a request to the minister. I cannot enforce the withdrawal because it is not unparliamentary, but if the minister wants to address it, she is welcome to.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I will address it. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition is saying that she did not say, “Just sign up, just get on with it.” What she is concerned about is the implication of that therefore meaning just get on with it and forget about all the work that had been done by the government to understand the implications of it. If the member is offended by anything I have said, I am more than happy to withdraw it.

Hon Sue Ellery: Thank you.

Debate Resumed

Hon HELEN MORTON: Therefore, may I continue, Mr President?

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Thank you.

The other point is that as a minister in 2011, the very first public comment I made—I was sworn in in December 2010, and when I was coming back from Rockingham, I was asked to speak on radio—was that we totally understand and support the concept of the NDIS being an entitlement of services rather than a rationing of services, but that we always knew we would have to understand those implications and make sure, from a Western Australian perspective, that we did not need to deal with some adverse issues. We did that and signed up to the NDIS but under our conditions, and we are very well served as a result of that.

Let me tell members about some of the things that are happening around other states at the moment. I have here some media comment about the NDIS as it was being rolled out in the ACT, for example. The comments were made in February 2015 when families were still saying that they are fearful of being left worse off after the NDIS rollout. The state in which these families live has signed up to the NDIS. That state did not undertake the work we are undertaking and put in place certain conditions for Western Australians before signing up. The ACT has handed it over to the NDIS holus-bolus and therefore it does not have that much of a say anymore about how the NDIS will roll out in its state. A family is reported to have said that they are concerned they have received the NDIS package, their children have been approved but they have nowhere to spend their money. That is one of the many, many issues that needed to be considered in Western Australia before we signed up to the NDIS. I think Hon Alanna Clohesy suggested that the Premier had commented that families could be worse off.

Hon Alanna Clohesy interjected.

Hon HELEN MORTON: The reality of life is that under the NDIS, that is actually happening.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: I did not say that. Here is the *Hansard* transcript; I did not say that.

Hon HELEN MORTON: As a result of that, a grandfather clause is written into the bilateral agreements around families not being worse off; yet people from the hills, for example, have said to me that they currently receive Disability Services Commission funding to the value of about \$90 000. They have been assessed and have been determined to need funding to the value of about \$40 000 for reasonable and necessary supports.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: If you had listened to my speech, I made that same argument.

Hon HELEN MORTON: These people are finding it quite difficult in deciding that they want to move over to the NDIA as the service provider. But we have agreed that we have to do that. Only Monday this week I was again in Melbourne dealing with issues around grandfathering clauses and other things as part of the Disability Reform Council, which I am a member of; in fact, I am the second longest-serving member of it. These are issues that needed and continue to need to be dealt with in Western Australia. Anyone who suggested that we should speedily sign up and get on with it without going through all these matters beforehand is very short-sighted and perhaps just political in their approach. The other comment Hon Alanna Clohesy made, which I need to correct, is something silly about seeing the writing on the wall and that we launched My Way to get ahead of the NDIS as it was rolling out. Hon Alanna Clohesy should not try to reinvent history but try to get some facts. The issue is that the local area coordination system in Western Australia has been in operation since 1988; it is recognised nationally and internationally. The Productivity Commission picked up on that initiative and said that it needed to be rolled out across the whole of Australia. We have 30 years of experience of operating a local area coordination service. Why would we want to go back to an organisation that had zero experience and zero knowledge of how to do it?

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Secondly, the suggestion was made that somehow or other WA was putting in place individualised packaging and funding just to roll out ahead of the implementation of the NDIS. That is absolute rubbish. This commenced in Western Australia in the mid-1990s, 20 years ago, and has been progressively rolling out in Western Australia ever since. Once again, in looking at what was happening in Western Australia, the Productivity Commission decided that that also needed to be incorporated into the way the National Disability Insurance Agency did its job. Consequently, again, we would say that given the level of experience and knowledge we have on this, why would we want to immediately roll out under an organisation that had zero experience and zero capability and no expertise in this area at all. By the time the Productivity Commission had tabled its report, 64 per cent of our Disability Services Commission annual budget was already managed in individualised funding, so any silly notion that somehow this was put in place in haste to try to get ahead of the NDIS is absolutely ridiculous. We had already moved towards the non-government services provision—again, a requirement of the NDIS—and we had already moved away from government-run large institutions to contemporary accommodation choices and options. That had all been happening since the 1990s. It is not the case with other jurisdictions. I understand why the NDIS wrote the report, but please do not suggest that the initiatives and reforms that had been put in place were somehow or other done in haste towards the beginning of the NDIS because that is ridiculous.

As I said, the NDIS was starting from scratch. There was no knowledge, no capability and no understanding. WA was coming from a position of 30 years' experience across a number of these things. Questions were asked about why we would want to go backwards. We needed to ensure that the experience and capability that was already operating in Western Australia would not be somehow pushed back to a lesser knowledge, a lesser level of experience and a lesser level of capability. The people of Western Australia with a disability did not want that to happen, and nor did we. When we started the trial, we were able to streamline into it very quickly. Plans had been done and funded and implemented. The Disability Services Commission is continuing to provide that service under the My Way trial.

Another matter that I need to correct for Hon Alanna Clohesy relates to the comments that she made about the budget and young people with a disability. Some people do not know how to read budget papers, and I understand that. They do not come from a background in which they require that sort of knowledge. I say to Hon Alanna Clohesy that Hon Ken Travers can help her with that. I know that he would be very keen and willing to help her.

Hon Ken Travers: I don't need to give any help. She understands them perfectly.

Hon HELEN MORTON: She cannot possibly understand them to have made the comments that she made. If she thinks that \$9 million has been allocated but somehow or other it is not all showing up in the budget papers, she needs to look across a couple of different budget papers. When something becomes a recurrent budget in the first section of those papers, it is not shown in the next lot of budget papers. When she says that the only amount showing up is \$2.5 million for 2016–17, that is because the new money to make up the money that has not already been included in the recurrent funding is there.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon HELEN MORTON: I would be quite happy to offer Hon Alanna Clohesy the opportunity to better understand that if she cannot get it from Hon Ken Travers.

The next point that I want to make, just to indicate the ridiculousness of this motion, relates to the comment made by Hon Alanna Clohesy that we need to know which people by disability type may or may not be eligible. It might not be as clear to everybody else, but that is the most profound statement I have heard from somebody who just does not get it and who cannot understand what the National Disability Insurance Scheme is all about. The NDIS is about functional disability; it is not about diagnosis. It is about the level of functional disability that an individual may have, regardless —

Hon Alanna Clohesy interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Can I ask Hon Alanna Clohesy to stop interjecting continually.

Hon HELEN MORTON: The NDIS is about the level of functional disability that an individual has, regardless of the cause and regardless of the diagnosis. Those things become unimportant. They are certainly not things that the NDIS is seeking to have included for people as part of their assessment process.

I want to add that I think there has been some misinformation—whether it is deliberate or otherwise, I am not certain—around the issue of psychosocial disability. It has come primarily from Hon Adele Farina and some of the people down at Busselton. I am going to put it on the record and hopefully the member will be able to clearly understand it this time. The NDIS does not provide treatment or support for people recovering from a mental

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illness. People with an ongoing disability are eligible for supports and services under the NDIS, including the WA NDIS My Way model, whatever the cause, including enduring psychosocial disability. A person's enduring psychosocial disability may be due to a mental illness whereby further recovery is unresponsive to treatment, is likely to be permanent, and substantially reduces their ability to undertake routine daily activities. WA NDIS My Way does not provide medical or other clinical or support services for people still engaged in recovery from a mental illness. These are provided through health and specific mental health programs. By far the great majority of people recover fully or sufficiently well from a mental illness with appropriate treatment and support to continue to live independently in the community, but for a few whose conditions do not further respond to that treatment and support, and their level of psychosocial disability substantially reduces their ability to undertake even routine daily activities, My Way will support them to live a fulfilling and productive life and strengthen social connections within their community. It is abundantly clear that an organisation such as Lamp Inc—I do not know whether I am right in assuming this, but someone told me that the member was a patron of that organisation—can have one program of services for people recovering from a mental illness and another program of services for people for whom NDIS is appropriate because they have reached their potential in terms of recovery. It is not helpful to mix up those two. One of them comes under the NDIS funding; the other comes from the Mental Health Commission's funding. In all the discussions I have had with Hon Adele Farina over this, I have always stipulated that the funding from the Mental Health Commission is not in doubt in any way as a result of the NDIS or anything else happening in Busselton.

The comment that I would like to make now—I found it quite stunning myself—relates to the projection in this motion that was displayed by its mover. I am not sure how people understand that concept in the psychology sense of projection, but in case people want to know, it is the unconscious ascription of a personal thought, feeling or impulse, especially one considered undesirable, to somebody else. Labor's lack of leadership, both past and present, is on the record. Labor's attempt to put people before politics is the reason that I came into this place in the first place. I found Labor's record on this disgusting. Using people with a disability, in particular people with mental illness and people with intellectual disability, as some kind of political football —

Hon Stephen Dawson: You know that's wrong.

Hon HELEN MORTON: The member should go and ask a couple of his members who apologised to me after the 2002 election and he will find out that it is absolutely true. He cannot do anything to disguise the hopelessly inadequate funding of services by the previous Labor government in the area of disability. Labor's attempts to thwart the transparent, accountable and governance arrangements has been profound as well. It is worthwhile to see the absolute blatant projection by the member opposite—I find it profound, but interesting as a case study if we wanted to do one—that is so embedded in the psyche of the member that she becomes oblivious to it. To be honest, it is a gift to all of us to see it being played out that way.

Point of Order

Hon SALLY TALBOT: My point of order is that the minister, as a minister of the Crown, has every right to seek the protection of the privilege laws that govern this place, and we all deeply respect the custom of the privileges mechanism. But it is incumbent on the minister, as a minister of the Crown, not just to make it up as she goes along. She has just referred to an election in 2002—goodness knows what she is talking about. That is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of unpacking the straight untruths that the minister is putting forward masquerading as debate in this place. The minister has a huge range of responsibilities and, as the member who moved the motion on our side of the house pointed out, there are people whose lives depend on the way the government responds to these challenges. All the minister is doing is using this precious time available to her to put her position on the record to talk in terms of lies, nonsense and making it up as she goes along, and personal attacks on the member who moved the motion. I think that is simply unacceptable.

The PRESIDENT: I think the member who stood and put a point of order expressed a point of view. I do not believe there is a point of order, but can I alert all members to standing order 45, which states —

All imputations of improper motives and all personal reflections on Members shall be considered highly disorderly.

With a motion like this it becomes a bit more difficult from the chair to just direct members to concentrate on the issues because you could argue that there is an imputation on the motion itself; therefore, you cannot deny a response in like to that. But I certainly want to see debate on issues surrounding disability services rather than personal opinions and recollections of who said what and when. Although there is no point of order, I would like to see the tone of the debate lifted a little.

Debate Resumed

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Hon HELEN MORTON: Yes, the election was in 2001, but the apology that was given to me by the member of the Labor Party at that stage was in 2002.

I wanted to talk about the issue of the extent of leadership around the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I indicate that the Premier, as the state's representative at the Council of Australian Governments, called for a levy to fund the NDIS and it was dismissed by then Prime Minister Gillard at the time it was suggested by our leader. I think again this goes to the extent of leadership on this particular matter that has been shown by the Barnett government. Equally, I mention that I am on the Disability Reform Council and, as I mentioned before, I am the second longest standing member on the council after the ACT minister. I can assure members that I have plenty to say there and have a role, I think, in holding the National Disability Insurance Agency to account for what it is trying to roll out across the whole of Australia as well as in Western Australia. Talking about leadership, I will just read the latest communiqué from a meeting I was at in Melbourne on Monday. This was put out by all of the states of Australia and the federal government and it reads —

In Western Australia, experience with the comparative trial of the NDIA and My Way models is informing work on the future roll out of the NDIS. WA NDIS My Way is demonstrating positive outcomes and key features of this model may have benefits for the roll out of NDIS in other jurisdictions.

If we want to talk about leadership again, here is leadership when Western Australia, through the My Way project, is demonstrating leadership across the whole of the nation. It has been recognised by the other states and the Disability Reform Council as being able to provide that kind of leadership. Let me look a bit more at leadership in this state and the comment somehow or other condemning us for lack of leadership—I cannot remember how the actual motion reads now; it is a while back. I refer to the NDIS reference group. Nothing that we did in Western Australia was done in the absence of the NDIS reference group. Let me just read the names of the people who work in that NDIS reference group. It was co-chaired by Joan McKenna Kerr, who is the CEO of Autism Association of Western Australia and mother of an adult with a disability; and Peter Conran, the director general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. We could not go much higher than that. Members include Sue Agostino, the mother of an adult son with an intellectual disability; Sam Jenkinson, who has lived experience of acquired physical disability and was at that time a Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability chairperson; Janet McLean, who is the mother of a young child with autism and also a member of the family that adopted me under the Politician Adoption Scheme. It was good to have those people participating in that. There are also Greg Madson, who has lived experience of sensory disability and vision impairment, and was then also a member of the MACD; Bruce Langoulant, who is the parent of an adult daughter with disability and chair of the Disability Services Commission board; Jen Stacey, who has lived experience of mental health issues; and Kerry Hawkins, who is the wife and carer of a husband with mental health issues. If anyone ever wants to understand precisely what carers go through, they should know and hear about Kerry Hawkins' unconditional love at a time when that family was going through the most difficult of times. Other members include Justin Lunn, who has lived experience of an acquired physical disability and is resident in the north west; and Gordon Trewern, who is CEO of a service provider. He was a support worker and has progressed his career to become CEO of Nulsen. Other members are Marcus Stafford, who is the CEO of a service provider; John Gherardi, who was the then president of the WA Association for Mental Health; Taryn Harvey, who is the CEO of an advocacy organisation; Ron Chalmers, the director general of the Disability Services Commission; Tim Marney, who was then Under Treasurer; Eddie Bartnik, who was then Mental Health Commissioner; and Kathy Hough who is the CEO of a service provider and a regional member of the Disability Services Commission board. I think members all recognise that in that group there is a fantastic mixture of people with lived experience and knowledge of being a carer and of the high level negotiations that will need to take place in Western Australia. This was the NDIS reference group, so when the Labor Party tries to condemn the government for lack of leadership, it is condemning these people as well. These people were providing us with the advice that we needed to be able to do the work of the state government around the NDIS.

I go a bit further and say through the very good advice of these people and the people who provide additional advice to us we established the two trials in WA. We attempted to negotiate this outcome with Prime Minister Julia Gillard, who was not going to have a bar of it. Actually, that is not true; she was supportive, but when she talked to Jenny Macklin, Jenny Macklin was not going to have a bar of it. Then Kevin Rudd became the Prime Minister and it was an absolute breeze. He wanted to see this trial go ahead this way and so on 5 August 2013 we were signed up. We would have signed up for this six months in advance if only Prime Minister Gillard and Minister Macklin had supported it, but they would not. It meant that we had put these multiple options to the federal government at the time and it took that amount of time for us to get them over the line on it. When people talk about lack of leadership, I have to say that the leadership that has been shown by the Disability Services Commission in pulling this together in the time frame that it did has been phenomenal—stable, strong leadership right from the top, right through the organisation. The most experienced disability services director general in

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Australia is here in Western Australia in Ron Chalmers. Within 10 months, the commission built the NDIS My Way operating model, which is now operating successfully in the lower south west. Building and operating the NDIS My Way model meant creating a computer system, developing a financial services approach and drafting legislation and all sorts of policies and procedures, including actuarial advice and the appointment of an actuary. It meant a whole of things. All this was achieved in 10 months and was ready to roll out with the NDIS on 1 July. It is not even remotely correct to suggest that there has been a lack of leadership over the NDIS in Western Australia; it has been anything but! Remember, as I already indicated, as a result of the leadership shown in Western Australia over many years, many of the elements already operating in Western Australia are now operating across Australia. I do think that we should entertain any more of the poppycock around the idea of a lack of leadership on the NDIS in Western Australia.

I want to focus on putting people with disability and their families and carers first and foremost. Once again, I have to say, members should look at the NDIS leadership reference group and see how we are putting people with disability, their families and carers first and foremost. It was always about them, and it will always be about them. The Carers Advisory Council 2014 compliance report comments that the council was pleased to note that the Disability Services Commission has once again achieved successive ratings of well developed across all areas, and that the commission is also to be commended for providing examples of good practice that demonstrate carer inclusion and support.

What more could one want when there is an independent body, the Carers Advisory Council, stating that level of support for the Disability Services Commission in its report. The report goes on to comment on the e-carers advisory service —

DSC clearly demonstrates an approach across the whole organisation that highly values and recognises the importance of carers in the lives of people with disability. This approach is being further developed via the WA NDIS My Way trials, one of which is already operating in the lower south west of the state and another is planned for Cockburn–Kwinana in 2015.

Carers are involved in all levels of both strategic and service delivery planning and review. The organisation has continued to build the capacity of carers ...

Really and truly, this sort of work is undertaken as a result of the leadership and ability of this government to put people with disability and their family members and carers first and foremost every step of the way.

Let us have a look at some of the comments that will come out in the second quarterly report. The second quarterly report is consistent with the first quarterly report, and states that it is progressing smoothly and there is anecdotal evidence that satisfaction levels are high and remain strong. So, 623 people have successfully transitioned, including over 50 people with psychosocial disability, and this has been done very efficiently. The average annual package cost is well within the funding envelope required, which indicates that so far we will be able to fund this at a sustainable level. Twenty-seven per cent of individuals were self-managing their plans at the end of the second quarter compared with three per cent nationally. That that number of people can self-manage is an indication of how mature the disability services sector is in Western Australia compared with other states. Just so members can be absolutely clear on this: there have been no complaints and no appeals. Putting people and their families and carers first and foremost is working for us. If members need a bit more on that—I will not be able to do it today because of a lack of time—they should read some of the fact sheets and the stories of individuals who are achieving those outcomes.

I now want to get into the area of commitment to funding and sustainability. I will touch on three points, because to spend any more time on this issue is just a waste of time for someone who really does not want to know this information. In the period just before the NDIS got underway, or it might have been just after—I cannot remember now—this government provided \$604 million to the not-for-profit sector to build hundreds of viable community sector organisations. That gave them the ability to recruit and retain staff and to put in place strong governance models. The partnership forum undertaken in this state that enabled that \$604 million to roll out over a series of years to those organisations is unprecedented. For this particular trial, more than \$100 million extra has been put into the My Way and NDIS trial sites. That is over and above the funding that the Disability Services Commission is already providing to people in those areas. It is anticipated that 8 400 people will be involved in this and over two years this level of funding will go to them, their families and carers to sustain and provide reasonable and necessary supports on an entitlement rather than a rationing scheme. That is the level of commitment this government has given to sustainable increased funding. If members want to look further to get a feel for what has been happening with funding in WA over the last little while, they should know that from 2008–09 to 2014–15, the Disability Services Commission budget has doubled. There has been unbelievable growth in this area. In the 2014–15 budget alone, the Western Australia government will provide \$692 million, or adding in the commonwealth government's money \$873 million, for disability services in

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Western Australia. That is an increase in this year alone, in the face of a quite tight financial environment, of 8.2 per cent or \$52.8 million compared with the previous year. Thirty-eight per cent of the growth in funding went to accommodation support across the state. I am not talking about the NDIS now; I am talking about support across the state. Twenty-four per cent of the funding went to community focus services; 27 per cent went to coordination and individual support; and 11 per cent went to family support. Nearly 74 per cent of the commission's budget will flow directly to the non-government sector for specialist disability supports and services in 2014–15.

I cannot imagine how anybody can say that this government has not demonstrated an unprecedented commitment to the funding for and the sustainability of the disability sector in Western Australia. I will go further. That is not the end of it; there is the continence management and support scheme. The WA continence management and support scheme received a one-off boost to its funding of \$2.5 million to assist people on the waiting list, because we recognised the number of people waiting for assistance. There is the \$9 million, which I already discussed and will not go over again, to prevent young people from inappropriately having to go into nursing homes. A lot of work has happened. This level of additional funding does not happen without something enabling the government to recognise the need, which goes back to this government's leadership on this issue as well. From the Premier down, the government is absolutely committed to people with disability, their families and carers; and to enabling the state government's vision for people with disability to live in welcoming communities that are facilitated by friendship, citizenship, mutual support and a fair go for everybody. I think that this government has a very, very proud record of supporting disability services in Western Australia.

I will finish my comments on the issues raised by Hon Alanna Clohesy about transparency, accountability and evaluation. A joint steering committee comprising senior representatives from the commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the state government's Department of the Premier and Cabinet are overseeing the two trials. I do not believe that Hon Alanna Clohesy would have the same concerns were a Labor government in power in the commonwealth, which was the situation when this was established. There you go; there is no federal Labor government now. As a result, what we have is what was put in place at the time by the member's Labor mates in Canberra. Do not worry about it—we were certainly involved in the development of it. The Australian Labor government was very much involved in it and the current commonwealth government continues to be involved. The commission is required to prepare detailed quarterly reports for the state and commonwealth governments. Members opposite say that those are reports that we write over. But let me tell member what else happens when the reports are written. When I was in Busselton last week, there was a whole-day forum. The morning forum was facilitated by an independent facilitator and was attended only by people with a disability and their carers and family members. The afternoon forum was for service providers and was facilitated by an independent facilitator. Representatives from the Disability Services Commission were not even allowed to be in the room when people were having their say and providing feedback. The suggestion that the Disabilities Services Commission is writing its own report to the state and federal government does not take into account the extent to which the Disability Services Commission goes to get independent information from people.

The advisory committee comprises people with disabilities, their family members and carers, service providers and community representatives and operates in the low south west and the Cockburn and Kwinana areas. It has oversight and constantly feeds information through to the Disability Services Commission. As members would be aware, Flinders University has been contracted by the commonwealth to evaluate the NDIS trials in the eastern states and it will look at the Western Australian trials as a NDIS trial in total. It was agreed between Western Australia and the commonwealth government of the day—this is very clear—that the WA trial evaluation, which would look at one against the other and evaluate what is good, bad or indifferent between the two trials, needed a different type of evaluation and would be undertaken by another organisation. The commonwealth supported that approach and gave Western Australia responsibility for procuring the evaluator. If the member is suggesting that somehow or other we have not been clear and transparent about how that was done, she needs to take that up with the procurement services of the state. The selection of an evaluator was done using state government processes and that evaluator is Stantons International. If the member thinks in any way at all that Stantons can be influenced by anything that we say or that the Disability Services Commission says, she must think that Stantons does not have the integrity that I believe it has.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: No-one said that.

Hon HELEN MORTON: The wording of the motion suggests that the opposition does not think that the evaluation is being done in a transparent and accountable way. People need to take stock of whom they are putting down when they say things like that.

In its evaluation, Stantons will cover such things as whether the key objectives are being met—I do not have time go through all of these—and whether the components are phasing in appropriately. It will consider the

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methodology and the analysis of the planning and funding processes and the analysis of policy and procedure. It will also consider the interviews, the interviews of the policy owners and the information collection that is being used. Further, it will also consider whether workshops are undertaken properly for those interviews to be undertaken and it will look at the data collection, the forms that are being used and the case studies and how many people will be in each of them.

Point of Order

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I request that the minister table the document from which she is reading, because that information would be useful to assist in the debate. I am quite sure that members will find it informative and it will assist the government in its claim that it is acting in a transparent way.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Can I clarify whether you are asking for the minister to table it and not identify it?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I am asking for both, thank you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Minister, a member has asked that you identify the document from which you were reading. Let us start at that point.

Hon HELEN MORTON: This document was supplied to Hon Alanna Clohesy, who asked if the methodology was available. It was done as part of supplementary information for questions on notice during the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Will the minister table the document?

Hon HELEN MORTON: It is already tabled!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: It is not tabled.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: It is not in here.

Hon HELEN MORTON: Where is it then?

Hon Alanna Clohesy: How long did it take the Disability Services Commission to actually —

Hon HELEN MORTON: Has the member got it?

Hon Alanna Clohesy: I haven't got it here—no.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! The point of order before the Chair is not an invitation for a slanging match across the chamber. I draw the minister's attention to standing order 59(2), which states that at the conclusion of a speech in which a member has quoted from a document, the document shall be tabled upon the request of any other member unless the member states that the document is a confidential document. Minister, I ask that you table the document.

Hon HELEN MORTON: I am very happy to table the document because, as I have said, this document has been provided to Parliament.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The document is tabled.

[See paper 2481.]

Debate Resumed

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral) [2.07 pm]: I was going to be as positive as possible in making a contribution to this debate this afternoon. However, the Minister for Disability Services' patronising contribution has made that really difficult. I am appalled by the minister's attempt at petty political pointscoring this afternoon. Hon Alanna Clohesy brought forward this motion because she thought it was a good issue for the house to debate. The minister lowered the tone of the debate this afternoon; indeed, it did not have to be as combative as it has been. The minister's comments that "The member opposite is silly", and, "She doesn't know what she's talking about", have not helped the debate. The minister spoke about things she described as profound. The only thing that was profound was the hypocrisy of her comments. It is strange quirk of this place, one that newer members will have to get used to. Hon Alanna Clohesy initially gave notice of the motion almost two years ago. When she gave notice of the motion there was a different political landscape in the disability portfolio. I have just listened to the minister for 45 minutes. I hope she listens to my contribution. The landscape has changed since notice of the motion was given. The government dragged its feet on a national disability insurance scheme but reluctantly and finally it came to the table and eventually acted. Hon Alanna Clohesy amended her initial motion. Although the government has acted on the issue of disability care and a national disability insurance scheme, we could condemn the Barnett government for a great number of issues. Indeed, there are a good number of issues in the disability area for which we could condemn the government for its lack of leadership.

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I am not going to spend my time going over the contribution that was made by Hon Alanna Clohesy. She made a very good contribution to this debate, not just this afternoon, but also before the break. I do not propose to go over too many of the same things. I will, though, raise some issues on which I think the government has been lacking in leadership in the area of disability. I also have to say that the disability sector in this state is supportive of the fact that we have two trials in operation in this state. I spend a lot of time meeting people in the sector, whether they are from non-government organisations or from National Disability Services WA, or whether they are advocates or people with disability. Almost unanimously, people say that they are happy now that two trials are in operation—namely the National Disability Insurance Agency's trial and the state government's NDIS My Way trial.

In the motion, Hon Alanna Clohesy calls on the government to put people before politics, and I have to say that the name of the state's trial is a bit galling. Really, it seems like a two-fingered salute to the federal government by referring to it as "My Way". From the outset, it has been a political pointscore exercise, and the minister has to admit that. Nonetheless, we have got it and the trial is in operation. I have said before in this place, and in the sector, that I believe it is a very exciting time to be involved in the disability sector. I believe that the National Disability Insurance Scheme, or whatever it is called at the end of the day, will make a difference to the lives of people with disability. It might not make a difference to all of them today, it might not make a difference to all of them tomorrow, but I certainly believe that in the future, once we have agreed upon a system, we will see an improvement in the quality of life of people with disability. I think that is a great thing.

When I say to people in the sector, people with disability or CEOs in the sector that I think it is an exciting time to be involved in the sector, I see a look of bewilderment in their eyes. For many of those people, particularly people with disability, they wonder whether their lives will ever change. They wonder whether they will ever get access to not just the services they require, but the services that they deserve. Over the years, these people have been made lots of promises by politicians of all persuasions and are yet to see vast improvements in their quality of life, but I believe those advancements are not too far away from us. I would be a hypocrite if I did not say this afternoon that I think it is beneficial for this state to have two trials in operation. From talking to people in the sector, I know that they believe there are a number of benefits from the My Way trial. Everybody wants a less bureaucratic, relationship-based engagement with people accessing services. They want people to be able to access services in their own home and in community settings. When talking to the sector, it says that the NDIS My Way trial is substantially relationship based and flexible in allowing where to meet people and for people to get treatment in their own home or community setting. Although the NDIS Perth hills trial proposes a relationship-based approach, it is not evidenced yet and people need to come to the NDIA offices for planning.

The NDIS My Way trial has a number of positive attributes. It is well linked in to our local area coordinated system. It is, as the minister said, a system that has served Western Australia well for many years. Our local area coordinators are for the most part well regarded and the system is well regarded by many, not just in Western Australia, but also right across the country. That is not to say that the NDIA trial, and system, has not got its benefits too; it has. We have to bear in mind that these are both trials and there will be issues from time to time. In fact, my office, and I am sure the minister's office, hears concerns from constituents or from people about both systems, and we will continue to hear concerns about both systems right through the trial. I guess the telling point will be how those problems are dealt with, addressed and worked through so that somebody else undergoing the trial does not face them, or, indeed, once we get through the trials, that those issues are ironed out and we do not have them in whatever system we go forward with.

Having listened to the minister this afternoon, members would think that there are no issues in the disability sector in Western Australia, but I have to say that that is not the case. There are a great number of issues in the sector in this state. One issue on which I have spoken recently and on which I believe the government has been lacking in leadership is in the area of employment in the public sector, particularly employment opportunities in the public sector. In this state in recent years we have seen the number of people with disability employed in the public sector drop. It has fallen from about 10 per cent a few years ago to about three per cent of all employees. That is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. If the government were serious about improving the quality of life of people with disability, this is an area that it could act upon now and make a difference to those people who have a disability and are seeking jobs. One has only to listen to our Prime Minister and the federal Liberal government to hear their attacks on people with disability. These people are not quite referred to as bludgers, but there is certainly an attack on them. If we were to believe what is being said, we would have to think that nobody with a disability wants a job, is looking for a job or is interested in that, when in fact that is not the case. I am sure everybody in this place has spoken to people with disability who have struggled to get a job or access gainful employment. I really believe this is an area in which the state government has failed to show leadership. A drop from about 10 per cent of employees in the public sector down to about three per cent is a great shame. The minister should hang her head in shame because this disability sector, and this disability portfolio, is broader

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than just the National Disability Insurance Scheme. That is just one element of it, and that is a trial that involves a few people in the south west, the Perth hills, and the lower southern suburbs —

Hon Alyssa Hayden: And you think she should hang her head in shame for that. She should be congratulated for that.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am not saying she should hang her head in shame for that issue; I am saying the issue is broader than just the NDIS. Madam Deputy President, I should make my comments through you. The honourable member must not have heard what I was saying. I was saying that everybody should be happy that we are having trials in this state, and I personally am okay with the fact that we have two trials in operation in this state; we can park that issue. What the honourable member must not have heard me say was that the minister should hang her head in shame because only 2.5 to three per cent of the people who work in the public sector are people with disabilities; that is down from about 10 per cent.

Hon Helen Morton interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, I am saying that it has dropped in the public sector from about 10 per cent down to 2.5 to three per cent. That is something that the minister should be ashamed of.

Over the summer period I have received correspondence, which I am sure other members have received, from the chief executive officer of Crown Resorts Ltd, Rowen Craigie, which of course now runs what was once known as Burswood Casino. He wrote to advise me of Crown's new CROWNability program, which was launched on 3 December 2014 on International Day of People with Disability. CROWNability is about ensuring that people with disabilities are given opportunities to gain employment at Crown in a diverse range of available roles, through matching people's abilities to real jobs. The letter reads —

Crown currently employs over 50 people with a disability across our Perth and Melbourne resorts in a number of different roles. As we continue to invest in the tourism industry, we believe that our CROWNability program will become an industry best practice model and provide increased opportunities for people with a disability to seek real employment opportunities at Crown.

If organisations like Crown, businesses being run for a profit, can do this and can see the benefit in creating real jobs for people with disabilities, why can the state government not do the same? Why has the state government failed to act? This, I believe, is one of those things that could be changed at the stroke of a pen. The state government could decide right now that it is going to set a target of 10 per cent, or whatever the figure might be, for employment in the state public sector of people with disabilities. That could be done at the stroke of a pen; it is not something that would need to have hundreds of millions of dollars put into it. It is something the government could do now if it had the will and cared. This is another area in which the state government has failed to show leadership.

Another area I want to talk about is education and training. Yet again in the education and training space we have a very small number of people with disabilities undertaking vocational education and training.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: They can't afford to.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Well, that is another point; I might get to that in a second.

The latest figures I have seen show that the proportion of people with a disability in VET in Western Australia is about 4.9 per cent. This compares with about 6.4 per cent across Australia. The figures show that Western Australia has the lowest proportion of people with a disability undertaking VET of all the Australian states and territories. Yet again I do not understand why the government is not helping people with disabilities access training and further education. Some of my colleagues behind me quite rightly pointed out a moment ago the fact that this state government has made a mess of the TAFE system. It has increased course fees by up to 500 per cent in some cases, and as a result we have seen numbers of students dropping across the board—so much so that in the Pilbara, for example, the TAFE system has had \$6 million removed from its budget this year. Not all of that is due to the fact that the number of people who can afford to access courses has dropped; there are other reasons, but that is one of the major reasons. People cannot afford to go to TAFE anymore, plus we have seen this government remove TAFE courses. The government has said that the training offered in Pilbara TAFE should only be in the oil and gas or resources sectors, and that if people in that region want to study anything else, they should not be doing so in the Pilbara. I have to say that that is a mistake, because as we move away from the boom, we will have to diversify the economy. We should be running things like tourism courses and helping the tourism industry, but instead we are seeing retrograde policies from the government and the removal of courses from that space, which is of concern. We have seen movement across the country in other states towards eliminating the problems that people with disabilities have in accessing VET and further education, yet we have not seen the same movement here. Yet again this is another area in which we have seen a lack of leadership from the Barnett government in the disability space.

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Over the past few months we have seen a number of other examples of this state government demonstrating a lack of leadership in the disability space. Over the past few weeks we have seen lift closures at train stations around the metropolitan area. One that is currently closed is Stirling train station. The government decided to build a new lift at Stirling train station, and that station will be closed for about four months while the lift is being replaced. Because the station does not have ramps to provide access to the platform, passengers with disabilities, whether they are in wheelchairs or Gophers, are being told that they have to plan ahead and make alternative arrangements. They are being told that they need to catch accessible bus services, but I have heard directly from people with disabilities who are used to catching the train that the bus services are not actually big enough to cope with the size of some of the Gophers. I heard from one person who was told, “Oh, you’ll simply have to hop on your Gopher and travel the four kilometres to the next train station.” I think that is appalling.

Hon Sue Ellery: They’ve also been told by the PTA representative, not the minister—the alternative minister, who does all the public speaking on behalf of the PTA—that they’ve been consulted with, when they have not been consulted with.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I have heard that comment, too.

I am not blaming the minister for this issue, but the motion refers to a lack of leadership from the Barnett government, so the whole government has to take responsibility for these things. Simply closing down these lifts for four months and telling disabled people that they are going to have to find their own way to the next train station has and is causing a serious amount of stress in people’s lives. The person who raised this issue with me last week said that the issue needed to be brought to the attention of the media. I told her that I was happy to put her in touch with the media and to get the media to talk to her, but she said that she was so concerned about this issue and that it was having such an effect on her life that she could not. She was so overwhelmed by the issue. Although the lift at Stirling train station being out of order for four months might not make a difference to many of us, to some people it does, and for them to simply be told, “Oh well, we’ve consulted; find your own way”, is really disgraceful, and I think it is another area in which this government has failed to show leadership.

It is not just Stirling train station; over the past few months we have also seen the same at Joondalup, Whitfords, Warwick and Glendalough train stations. Yes, those stations were built at a time when there were different standards, so we do need to upgrade them by making the lifts bigger and making the platforms more accessible. To think that one agency can decide “We are just going to do this”, and not have proper consultation and not have a proper plan in place to help these people get from A to B is a real shame. I think that the minister, as Minister for Disability Services, should be raising these issues with her colleagues and although we might not be able to fix this situation now, I would hope that if the minister raised this issue with her colleagues, perhaps we could stop it from happening again. Perhaps we could stop similar things happening in the future.

Another issue that has come to my attention over the last few months relates to the new Fiona Stanley Hospital. I had contact in the last few days from a constituent, who previously went to another hospital for treatment. This person is in their 60s and requires fairly frequent attendance at hospital. This person is in a wheelchair, has mobility issues, but she does have a hoist on her car and normally she can park a car and get herself out of the car and that is fine. What we are seeing in the case of Fiona Stanley Hospital though is that this constituent has raised the issue that even with an ACROD sticker and parking in an ACROD bay, she is now being forced to pay \$3 an hour to park at the hospital. This person has raised with me the fact that she goes to hospital for two and a half to three hours each time. She is being slugged \$9 to park there. That is one issue. The second issue is that where she has to park now is right under a fairly low wall and ceiling, so she is not actually able to use the hoist to lift herself out of the car.

Hon Simon O’Brien: Where is this?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

Hon Simon O’Brien: Have we fixed the problem yet?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is in train.

Hon Simon O’Brien: Give me her details and I will have it fixed by the next time the house meets.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Okay, I will pass them to Hon Simon O’Brien this afternoon.

In this day and age this stuff should not be happening. Again, I do not blame the minister for where the parking bays are at the new Fiona Stanley Hospital, but I do blame the government. This new hospital is great for the state, but there have been a few issues with it. There have been lots of issues with it and that is a different debate and I am not going to go into all those today. I will leave Serco alone. I do not want to see them operating in

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a disability space; they are in the health space and I certainly do not want to see them operating in this space. The fact is that somebody—many people—were involved in the plan of this new hospital. Whoever decided that the ACROD bays should be under a roof, and did not think about some of the health problems or equipment that people with disability have and have to access, should be dragged over the coals. In cases like this, these agencies should be talking together. Proper planning should be undertaken. We also see issues with the whole Disability Access Inclusion Plan process—DAIPs. Government agencies have to provide or had to do a Disability Action Inclusion Plan every year, and questions are always asked in this place about whether agencies have undertaken those DAIPs. What we do not actually see is anyone investigating. We do not see anybody read through those DAIPs and actually work out whether those agencies that have said they would do X, Y and Z have done them. I fully support DAIPs; they are a great tool to get agencies thinking about this stuff, considering people with disability, but there is a fault in the system. There is a problem, and that problem is that nobody, no agency, no-one is looking through those DAIPs and holding those agencies to account and that is why we see stupid things. It is a stupid thing. Stupid things like the ACROD bays at Fiona Stanley Hospital being in an area that has a low roof that does not allow people to use their wheelchairs or their other medical equipment. I am not holding the minister to blame for this; I am saying that this is another area where the state government has shown a lack of leadership. In this day and age, these things should not be happening.

Then of course we read in *The West Australian* today—I am sorry I was not able to get to the Senate hearings that took place in town this week—about the high number of people with disability living in aged-care homes. I have come across this issue in my electorate. In my electorate there are few respite facilities available to people with disability. In the vicinity around my electorate office, in Hedland, there is a facility in Point Samson. It used to be run by the state; it is now run by a non-government organisation. My constituents tell me that it costs \$600 to get a night's respite in that facility, which is out of reach for most people I have to say. But even leaving that service aside, if a person could afford to go there, great, but most people cannot. There are not enough beds in the regions, there are not enough respite facilities available, and the fact that young people, 20-year-olds, are not only getting respite in aged-care facilities, which is kind of the norm in regional areas, I have to say —

A government member: It's not.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It happens quite frequently. Not that they are just getting respite in those facilities, it is the fact that according to the article from *The West Australian* —

About 520 young West Australians with disabilities—some as young as 18—are living in aged-care homes because of a shortage of dedicated housing and residential places.

I think that is appalling.

Hon Helen Morton: The report is not accurate.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, I will prosecute this issue further at a later date; I would like to get to the bottom of it. Whether the number is 520—I think it might be higher than that—or 50 it is an issue that we should all be ashamed of in this day and age that the only place that we can house young people with disability is in an aged-care facility.

Hon Helen Morton: It is not the only place.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The fact of the matter that we are housing young people with disability in aged-care facilities, I really think is appalling.

Hon Helen Morton: Some of them choose that. In your own electorate, some people would choose that because it means they can stay close to family.

Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson: What, all 520 of them? That is not a reason.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: So they can stay close to family, why not provide appropriate accommodation?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Absolutely.

Hon Helen Morton: For one person in one rural community?

Hon Alanna Clohesy: Yes!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, it is for one person in one community. Think of the whole Pilbara Cities policy and this government's spending in the regions: the waste in some areas, the waste of money on Pelago and the fact that Osprey Village service work accommodation is sitting half empty, we have wasted massive amounts in the regions. Yet this is an area where we could have spent some money that could have had real benefits to people and could have improved people's quality of life. This is another area in which this state government has shown a lack of leadership.

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Another issue I want to highlight this afternoon relates to the Quadriplegic Centre in Shenton Park. I think this too is an area in which the state government has dropped the ball and shown an incredible lack of leadership. I do not have the latest figures in front of me showing how many residents are in the facility, but I know that a great many residents have been there for a very long time—some for as long as 50 years. They have been forgotten. I have heard—anecdotally, but I will raise it this afternoon—from one constituent that some people cannot get assistance from a carer to get up in the morning; they have to wait until the afternoon before a carer can give assistance. The only way they can access support in the morning is if somebody moves out or somebody dies. I think that is a crying shame. The minister and Hon Alyssa Hayden, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, know that a number of questions have been asked in this place about the Quadriplegic Centre in Shenton Park. I know from reading the annual reports that the government has been saying for a long time that this centre will close, but it has not yet. Since I have been a member of this place, I have seen two annual reports, but I have seen no movement in the area. I dare say that members who have been in this place for longer than I, have seen many annual reports containing the same issues that say that that place should close, and that people are not getting the proper treatment and are not being looked after properly, yet we have seen absolutely no movement. In October last year, I asked a question of Hon Alyssa Hayden, the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health, about the Quadriplegic Centre. The answer provided by the minister reads —

Government is considering the future of the Quadriplegic Centre and will advise the Parliament when a decision has been taken.

We have seen no movement on it yet. I really hope that the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health will come back to this place very soon to tell us about the government's plan for this centre, because it is time the forgotten people in that facility are given the proper care and respect they should have been getting for a long time. This is yet again another area in which the Barnett government has shown lack of leadership in the disability space.

Another area I want to draw attention to is an area I have raised in this place before and will continue to raise because it is of concern to me. It relates to the privatisation of disability services accommodation. Members know that the government made a decision, probably two years ago, and announced last year that it would outsource 60 per cent of the accommodation services that are provided by the Disability Services Commission. The government, the minister in her statement and the director general of the Disability Services Commission said in answer to parliamentary questions since then, firstly, that it was about the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which I do not think is true. I have an issue with that. The minister has a different view; she said it was, but I do not believe it is the case. Secondly, they said it was about providing choice to people. I have raised this point before because I have been contacted by families, as have other members on this side as, I dare say, have members on the other side.

Hon Helen Morton: Your union members.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, a public sector union that has no links to the Labor Party has contacted us. It has expressed concerns about its workforce, and quite rightly so. It is not those unions I am concerned about.

Hon Helen Morton: It's what they are telling families.

Hon Sue Ellery: It couldn't possibly be families thinking for themselves!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is these families —

Hon Alanna Clohesy: How patronising to the people.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members. Hon Stephen Dawson has the call.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy President. It is these families who have come to see me and raised concerns in the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs, chaired by Hon Simon O'Brien. They have spoken to many of us about their concerns and that they do not have the choice of keeping their loved ones in a facility that many of them have been in for 10 to 20 years.

Hon Helen Morton: They can stay in the facility.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: They cannot, minister. They cannot stay in the same facility with the same services provided with the same staff.

Hon Helen Morton interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: They cannot; there is no choice.

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Hon Helen Morton: The same people; the same place.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There is no choice. The minister says this is about choice. There is no choice to stay where they are.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! The honourable minister does not have the call at this time, Hon Stephen Dawson has the call.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy President. I was saying that these people do not have real choice. They do not have the choice to remain with their loved ones in the place they are in with the same staff who are there now. That choice is not there. The minister says they can choose to stay in the same house.

Hon Helen Morton: With the same people.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is not true in some cases, because some non-government organisations are saying, “These are too hard; we don’t want these people in the same house; can we move them around?” They are not getting the choice to say where they can live with the people they love and with the staff they love. There is no choice for them. I am not making any comment on the non-government providers operating in this space because I have to say they do a tremendous job. In fact, we see a lot more innovation in the non-government sector. However, I am saying this afternoon that the minister says it is about choice; yet, at the end of the day, these families cannot choose to stay where they are with the people there, with the people they love and with the staff who have looked after them, in some cases, for a very long time. I think that too shows a lack of leadership. In this case it is lack of leadership from the minister. If she had any leadership she would sit down with the families and talk to them and let them stay where they are. If she sat down with the families and talked to them, she might find that the number of people who want to stay where they are is not as great as she fears. If it is about giving choice to people in the sector, the minister should let them stay where they are and not force them to live under a different service.

I could raise a number of other issues this afternoon but I will not. However, I will raise one more before I finish because I do not want to forget about it and that relates to the National Injury Insurance Scheme or the no-fault accident insurance scheme. This too is an area in which the government has been lacking in leadership I have to say, although we have seen some small movement recently. We have heard of a public comment period occurring before Christmas.

Hon Nick Goiran: Get the rope out. You’ve got five minutes to get the rope out nice and long and see what happens.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Is Hon Nick Goiran trying to —

Hon Sue Ellery: Who are you threatening? What do you want to do?

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! If you are finished, Hon Stephen Dawson has the call.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Before Christmas we heard of a public comment period in this space but as yet we have seen no commitment from this state government to introduce a no-fault accident insurance scheme this year.

Hon Helen Morton: Do you want to wait for the consultation process to finish or do you want to run ahead of it?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I have to say that I think the government eventually made a public comment period only because members on this side, the Labor Party, said it should do so. The Leader of the Opposition in the other place, Hon Mark McGowan, was out raising our constituents’ concerns and the fact that this should happen.

Hon Helen Morton interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! The minister has already had an opportunity to contribute to this debate. Hon Stephen Dawson has the call.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The Leader of the Opposition was out showing leadership on this issue because it needed to be shown and because members on the other side, including the minister, were plainly and simply silent on the issue. Members on this side and the opposition have led on this issue. I think members opposite set up a public comment period because they were guilted into it.

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Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Madam Deputy President, you might not have heard the interjection from Hon Sue Ellery when she said that members opposite are feeling a little sensitive about the issue. I agree with my leader; they are feeling sensitive about it.

Several members interjected.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There we go again. That brings me back to my first point. There is that petty politicking on the far side. It is silly. Those opposite do not know what they are talking about. The minister is patronising. She cannot help herself. It does get nasty. I am making points that I believe are valid to this debate this afternoon. There are a range of reasons why those members on the far side should be condemned for their lack of leadership in the disability space. I will keep raising those issues until those opposite start listening to them.

Yes, we have the NDIS trial on the way and yes, we have the My Way trial on the way, but there are a number of other great things that are important to people with a disability in this state. The minister and her government have to act on them; they have to start listening and start making the lives of people with a disability better because they deserve it.

HON AMBER-JADE SANDERSON (East Metropolitan) [2.51 pm]: I, too, rise this afternoon to support the motion for a number of reasons, which I will outline as I go. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures from about three years ago, around one in five Australians had a disability. This is expected to increase significantly over the next 15 years to around one in four people. This is an important motion for the house to be debating; this is an important issue. Those opposite are not the only people who talk to people in the sector and they are not the only people who are really passionate about this sector. I think it is fair to give credit to members on both sides of the house. If we look through the history of the media reports and the campaigns and issues that people have been involved in, we see that people on both sides and from all parties regard this issue very highly. It is an issue that needs to be debated with decorum, with some respect and with an intelligent approach, rather than cheap political pointscoring.

Across the country in the past few years we have seen a lot of activity in disability services, and that has been a good thing. There has been an awful lot of activity in WA in particular. There is a view in some parts of the community, not so much in the disability sector but in the broader community, that with the introduction of the NDIS, disability is somehow over and done with; it is fixed. That is misguided. Those of us who are close to it and see it, including the minister, know that that is not the case and that much more needs to be done. We are certainly in the very early transition phase. Even trial sites in other states such as South Australia and Tasmania, which have been operating much longer than those in WA, are still in very early transition phases. It will be a long and steep learning curve for the bureaucracy and for the clients.

Judging by a lot of the stuff that comes from the government, in many ways it would have us believe that all is fine in the sector and everything is fixed—it has done a lot. There is no arguing that it has done a lot in this sector. I would argue that it has not been done in the most competent way and not in the best interests of the sector, but it is fair to say that this government has done a lot. We have seen component 1 and component 2 funding to the sector over the last few years. We have seen the introduction of My Way and the honing of the local area coordinator model in the south west, and the Cockburn trial and the NDIS trial are about to come online as well. They are all good things to be happening, but the picture is far from complete, particularly for ageing parents of children with a disability who have great anxiety about the future of their children and how they will survive when they pass on.

We should look at the component 1 funding that this government announced in the 2011–12 budget. It is an issue that I have raised in this place, and I will raise it again because \$604 million of taxpayers' money went to the NGO sector to increase sustainability and capacity building. No sustainability and capacity issues were identified last year by the Partnership Forum, which was set up by the government. The biggest sustainability and capacity issue that was identified was the workforce. The workforce in the disability sector is ageing significantly. We will see an explosion of need in the sector, as evidenced by not only the NDIS, but also the ageing population and people developing disabilities as they get older. Currently, it is a very low paid industry; it has disparate pay rates and there is a big gap between the pay of those who work for the Disability Services Commission or the government, and those who work in the NGO sector. In 2011–12, that pay disparity was around 25 per cent. That is largely an agreed figure that came out of the material that the partnership forum released. If we could say that sustainability issues are workforce related, they have to be wage related. The government failed to provide any accountability measures to that money. To quote the Premier, "This is money to the NGO sector—no strings attached." He used those words—"no strings attached". No public money should be given to any sector or

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anyone with no strings attached. We should always be measuring the outcomes of what public money is used for. It is a reasonable expectation of all taxpayers. But no, he was “Mr Generosity”, providing \$600 million with no strings attached. I want to give an example of the exasperation of senior Treasury officials when so much money was given out with no strings attached and no accountability. During the hearings of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! The only person who has the call is Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson.

Hon AMBER-JADE SANDERSON: At a hearing in 2012 with the then Under Treasurer, Tim Marney, the committee was talking about component 1 and component 2 funding. Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich asked —

Did you evaluate component 1?

Mr Marney replied —

Yes.

...

In fact, we constantly monitor the flow of funds under component 1. Remember, component 1 was merely an up-front payment—an uplift in funding.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: So under component 1, you are evaluating only the funding; you are not evaluating the actual outcomes delivered by the not-for-profit organisations in terms of service delivery. Is that correct?

Mr Marney: Correct, ...

No outcomes are being measured by this. I would like to know which organisations have improved their sustainability and capacity. I know that some organisations use it to pay down debt. Other organisations passed on 25 per cent pay rises to their staff. Now we are left with an NGO sector that is also deeply unequal in the rate of pay. One of those organisations that is one of the lowest paying is a contractible NDIS organisation as well. That is an issue.

We have component 1 funding. Money was handed over. For some organisations, it built their capacity. They passed it on to staff. They have a long-term, well-resourced workforce. For others, they simply did not. The government has no recourse at all. Component 2 funding came with some strings attached, which is a good thing. There is more accountability for component 2 funding. It was an important part of the Partnership Forum’s proposals for the government that it price its services properly to clients. This has had some difficult impacts for people. The submission from People with Disabilities WA refers to funding, mostly combined application process funding, but it does refer to this component too, and what the government has termed procurement reforms for the sector. It states —

PWdWA considers that the clear good intent of the WA Government towards people with disabilities has been misplaced as it appears that it is only the organisations and agencies who claim to serve interests of people with disabilities that have benefitted. PWdWA has only become aware of the significance of the changes. Advocates were shocked by the information received from a Service Provider ... under the new arrangement this particular Service Provider will charge the person with a disability considerably more for the support service delivered. As there will not be any equal increase in an individual’s personal funding the service provided will decrease in quantity to the level that can be afforded.

So the government is requiring service providers to shift that cost on to the clients and the clients are not getting any commensurate increase in their ability to pay for the services. That is a really bad outcome for those people.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: You didn’t hear about that one, minister, did you?

Hon AMBER-JADE SANDERSON: Look, she is not paying attention. That is a terrible outcome.

The other area I want to touch on in this debate is combined application process funding and the report tabled by the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee just last year, not very long ago. Its findings make for really uncomfortable reading.

Hon Helen Morton: Until you put them into perspective.

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Hon AMBER-JADE SANDERSON: I am providing the perspective; I am going through all the areas, thank you, minister. I do not need the minister's assistance. This report makes for uncomfortable reading. I will highlight some of the points in the report. The competition for the CAP is incredibly intense. An average of 10 per cent of applications were successful in the last funding round. There is pressure to focus on the negative in the applications. Desperation can lead to extreme behaviour such as threatening suicide or making a child homeless. I quote one submission, which states —

Anything that might make an application more competitive is fair game ...

One of the submissions in the report states that families who have had meetings have described the process as degrading, frustrating and unfair. It is clear from the report that demand clearly outstrips the available funding. There is not enough money in the sector to support the needs and the requirements, and people are resorting to desperate measures in their applications to get that funding. This is for a sector that has been brought up on rationalisation, basically. It has been rationed on everything. I believe that is part of what has created such anxiety, with the state government holding off for whatever reasons—I will go into the value of those reasons—on signing up to the NDIS. The sector could see this model, it is living on a system of rations and it felt as though the system was being held back from it by the state government. The public perception is that money is running out. Parents say there is no money or the money will run out and they will be left with nothing. The response from government continues to be that funding in the sector has increased and it ignores the corresponding increases. Yes, it has increased, but it is not being tied to achievable outcomes. That is clear from component funding 1 and 2. Demand is outstripping funding.

Applicants received standardised rejection letters. That is harsh. It is a consistent criticism throughout the submissions that people pour out their most intimate personal family details and pin all their hopes on receiving some relief from the crisis that they are in, and they get a standardised pro forma letter from the department. It seems completely unnecessary.

There was a consistent view in submissions and from the committee that there is a lack of transparency around the combined application process. It does not seem to have any criteria. There do not seem to be any clear criteria for people to be able to apply. I have heard arguments for and against having criteria for CAP funding, but there could be more openness and transparency with the funding to allow people to at least see why they are not being supported with that funding. It is all very well for the government to say it is an old system that will be phased out, but this is the system now; this is the reality now for many, many people. The trial sites are trial sites and they are in particular sites. There are still an enormous number of people reliant on this funding and reliant on the Disability Services Commission to provide this funding and support for them, not just in a crisis situation.

One submission that also highlighted significant unmet need was that of the Centre for Cerebral Palsy, which discussed the Productivity Commission's report into disability care, as it was when the submission was written. The Productivity Commission made some interesting observations in its review. The submission quoted the Productivity Commission's report. It states —

‘There is a significant unmet demand for disability services in Australia, and this has been the case for decades.

No-one is arguing that —

It has led to rationing and the growth of waiting lists, which leads to greater unmet demand. It affects a wide range of everyday activities including self-care, mobility, communication, cognition and transport...Funding is insufficient across all jurisdictions.’

The Centre for Cerebral Palsy's submission continues —

The Centre is aware that there are three levels of unmet demand in just about all facets of disability services. They relate to people with disability who:

- Do not receive any support they require;
- Receive some support but require more than they currently do;
- Receive some support but require types of support that are not accessible.

The Centre is aware of people with disability and their families who have given up on applying for CAP funding because their applications have not been successful over a long period of time. Rather than be disappointed yet again their preference is to stop applying.

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That is a tragic and incredibly sad situation for those people to be in. It also makes it impossible for DSC to properly evaluate that level of unmet need in the community because people are just throwing their hands up and saying it is too hard, too draining and that they will not do it anymore.

The Community and Public Sector Union–Civil Service Association of WA, the union that represents DSC support workers, provides a case study in its submission. It states —

Esme is eighty years of age and is the full time carer of her 57 year old daughter Lisa. Esme's health is in decline, she has suffered two strokes and is concerned what would happen to Lisa should she pass away or is incapacitated.

Esme has approached her Local Area Coordinator to request funding for accommodation support so that Lisa can be transitioned into alternative accommodation. This will allow Esme to support Lisa in her move and Lisa will not have to contend with the trauma ...

Strictly speaking, the case is not critical or urgent as the daughter still has a roof over her head, the mum is there as a primary carer and she is not going to kick her out onto the street, so she would not be eligible for CAP funding. This is clearly a case of great need and one that reflects a lot of situations for many families and ageing parents across the country and the state. The government's response to the CAP was dismissive, unfair, patronising and incredibly unhelpful. It did not take the issue seriously at all. It simply said there was nothing to see. The government said there were just a small number of people who were unhappy and it was never going to make everyone happy. Actually, this affects a huge number of people.

I now move on to the NDIS My Way scheme in the south west. I agree with Hon Stephen Dawson that the sector is happy that there are two trials happening. It is happy that there is something happening around the NDIS. I remember the absolute palpable relief in the sector when WA finally signed up to the trials and agreed to do them. It is now incumbent upon the WA government to give both trials a fair go and the best opportunity to succeed. At the end of the day, whether it is My Way or NDIS, everyone in this sector wants the best outcome, and if having those two trials allows best practice to develop, that is a good thing. It did take a long time. There was a huge amount of anxiety in the sector and there was no real light at the end of the tunnel for people. People felt that WA was going to be left out in the cold. We have seen NDIS My Way operating in the south west and we will see Cockburn and Kwinana online shortly. I read the latest quarterly report and I want to make the point that it provides some very useful facts, but it should not in any way be seen as an independent evaluation. It has identified over 600 eligible individuals and there are 595 with approved plans. Of those, 352 have actual funding and around \$500 million in cash payments have been passed on.

That is a good thing; people are getting funding and plans and are seeing their local area coordinators. One thing that jumped out at me while I was reading the report—I am sorry that the minister has gone already—perhaps someone can explain in a later contribution —

Several members interjected.

Hon AMBER-JADE SANDERSON: I apologise; she has made her contribution already. Could someone explain the significant gender gap in those who have plans? This is a genuine question. I am interested to know why this is the case. Statistically, slightly more men have a disability, but not to the same extent as here. There is a very significant gender gap; there are a lot more men than women receiving financial plans in the south west. I think that is interesting and it is something that the commission should look at. Why are women with disability not accessing those plans? There is a high proportion of people with autism and intellectual and behavioural disabilities, which largely fits with the overall statistics. I think something that has been lacking in the planning for both the NDIS and My Way—I have been closer to the NDIS than to My Way—is the representation of people with behavioural and intellectual disabilities on the boards and working groups, which does not represent the community. Given the large number of people with those disabilities taking up the plans, there needs to be good and clear advocacy and the development of plans for them.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to temporary orders.