



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**BILLS**

**Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2013-2014**

**Consideration in Detail**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 4 June 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Tuesday, 4 June 2013  
**Page** 5227  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Macklin, Jenny, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Ms MACKLIN** (Jagajaga—Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Minister for Disability Reform) (17:13): I do thank the member for Robertson very much for that heartfelt question and once again I apologise to her and to her constituents for not being able to come to her electorate on that day. As she correctly says, the Prime Minister and I were with the Premier of Queensland. It was a very significant day for the state of Queensland as it signed on to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Disability Care Australia. The member for Robertson and I are making sure that we can get together next week in her electorate to talk with her constituents about this most significant reform. As some have described it, it is the reform of a generation. I think the reason it is described in that way is that there are so many people around the country who are living their lives in the way that the member for Robertson has just described. People do have to wait and wait and wait for a wheelchair and, when it comes—if it is for a child—it no longer fits. Then they have to wait again. The system is broken; the system is under-funded; and that is why this government has decided to change it. For the first time ever, in this budget it is fully funded.

In last year's budget, of course, we had the first \$1 billion to make sure that we could start DisabilityCare Australia, and I will talk in a minute about how it is going to start. I am very pleased that the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers has joined us. But can I say just how significant it is to have \$14.3 billion allocated and committed in this year's budget, which will give to the family that you describe the sort of security that they have never, ever had before. I am sure that you could describe other supports that this family has been waiting for and has not been able to get.

One of the biggest areas of concern from families, of course, is the lack of access to respite and the lack of security about where their adult sons or daughters will live once mum and dad pass on. This is a huge worry for so many ageing parents who want to know that there will be supported accommodation when they are no longer there to care for their son or daughter who has a disability.

We are, as the member for Robertson said, very, very pleased that we have an agreement in New South Wales for the full rollout of DisabilityCare Australia, and I pay credit to the Premier of New South Wales for stepping up and agreeing in the way that he did. He really came to the table with the attitude that, for around 150,000 people with disability—and of course that does not include their family members or the carers, who will also benefit—we are about to change their lives. Most significantly in New South Wales, where the largest launch site is going to be, it is all going to start in just a few weeks time, on 1 July, in the Hunter region. It is completely funded both in last year's budget and now right out into the future, so the people of New South Wales can be secure.

In the electorate of the member for Robertson, we estimate that there are around 2½ thousand people with significant and permanent disabilities who will be covered by DisabilityCare. But not only are you going to be saying to the people with disability that they can now know that they will get the care and support they need into the future; you can also be sure to say to the carers and to their family members, 'Your life will be able to change as a result of this major reform that is the centrepiece of this year's budget.' I thank the member for Robertson very, very much for her question.