



House of Assembly

Tuesday 26 July 2011

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

DISABILITY SERVICES REGIONAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:58): My question is for the Minister for Families and Communities. Can the minister give details of how the Rann government is boosting disability services in regional South Australia?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability) (15:58): I thank the member for Light for his question and his ongoing commitment to supporting South Australians with a disability in regional and country areas.

I recently had the privilege of launching new disability services in Whyalla, Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln to support local people with a disability and their families. Whilst we know that there is more still to be done, our state provides accommodation support for nearly 5,000 people, and nationally this is the highest proportion of any state's total disability population.

When I visited Whyalla, Madam Speaker, you joined me at the opening of a four-bedroom respite home that is being run by Orana. This is a respite service that is also licensed to provide overnight care for children. To get this service up and running, a grant of \$198,000 per year has been provided by the state government. Respite will operate on weekends from Friday night through to Monday mornings.

Additional funding is being provided by the Department for Families and Communities to extend the use of the house during weekdays, where it will be used for other activities such as vacation care programs. I understand approximately 38 adults and 12 children with disabilities living across Eyre Peninsula are now registered to receive the weekend respite services.

This will be bolstered by another respite facility in Port Lincoln, which I opened only last week. Three new homes will provide supported accommodation as well as respite for 20 to 30 local people with a disability. The homes in Port Lincoln are part of the \$10 million project funded equally by Bedford and the state government to deliver more supported accommodation across South Australia.

As well as delivering accommodation in the metropolitan area, country South Australia has benefited with projects in Port Pirie, Murray Bridge, Wallaroo and, soon, Millicent, where we will be turning the first sod. The Bedford housing program will deliver new homes and a new life for 70 people, and is contributing to a bigger program of the Rann government that represents a spending commitment of nearly \$74 million for nearly 400 people.

Last weekend I also announced an extra \$400,000 in funding for respite and day option services for people living with a disability on Kangaroo Island. This will deliver much-needed services for people who have had to travel to the mainland to access them. Respite services will be introduced as quickly as possible and should start within the next couple of months. I am told that will benefit around 50 people. The flexibility in this package also ensures islanders can still access respite services on the mainland if they choose to do so.

I have to say that this announcement was very enthusiastically welcomed by the mayor and locals alike. I had the pleasure of visiting the day options program and meeting a number of people receiving those services. It was cooking day yesterday at the day options, so I was able to share my expertise in making and rolling the sausage rolls I did my best to support the local economy and I bought a hand-woven, hand-knitted woollen beanie in Kingscote and one in Penneshaw. I attended the Wisanger Sports Club's 100th anniversary. I did not see the member for Finniss, but I was there helping them celebrate.

We know there is still more work to do but this government has doubled the funding for disability services, and our commitment and determination to make a difference in the lives of those living with a disability, and families caring for them, continues in both metropolitan and country South Australia.