

From: LNP Media [LNP.Media@opposition.qld.gov.au]
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Andrew Cripps MP
Shadow Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs
Member for Hinchinbrook

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Labor turns its back on people with disabilities

The Bligh Labor Government has turned its back on offering an improved criminal history screening process for people working in the disabilities sector, LNP spokesman for Disability Services Andrew Cripps said today.

“By voting against the LNP’s Bill to prevent people with violent criminal histories from being employed as carers for people with disabilities, the Bligh Labor Government has ignored a real need in the community and wasted an opportunity to improve the security of people with disabilities.”

Mr Cripps said that while the overwhelming majority of carers in our community were exemplary, compassionate and dedicated people, there had been some cases of carers assaulting those they care for, and breaching the trust of the position.

“A breach of this trust has devastating effects for the person with a disability, often extending beyond physical wellbeing to social interaction and emotional development,” he said.

“It is a choice to work in the field of disabilities; it is not a choice to have a disability.

“The role of Government is to protect the most vulnerable people in our society.

“In this case, the people with disabilities need more legislative protection and enshrinement of liberties and rights than do the carers with criminal histories.”

Mr Cripps said the LNP had raised the issue in the Parliament 18 months ago, following the assault of a man with disabilities by a carer who had a history of violent criminal offences.

“The Bligh Government has consistently refused to pay any attention to the pleas of families who are asking for a simple check on the carer they entrust their loved ones to, and it has ignored the damage that is done when the system goes wrong.

“It was only when I introduced the Disability Services (Criminal History) Act Amendment Bill in October last year that the Bligh Government realised the issue was not going to disappear.

“Suddenly, they produced a weak, bureaucratic response in the form of their Criminal History Screening Bill which will not give people with disabilities and their families any

more security than they had in the past — they will have no more comfort in the system and no increased safeguards.”

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