

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, 23 September 2009, Page 3275

### DISABILITY FUNDING

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (15:41):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the minister representing the Minister for Families and Communities questions about disability funding.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON:** On 4 June 2009 I asked a series of questions regarding the lack of care and support being given by Disabilities SA to a severely disabled seven year old child and his family who have been left on a waiting list that is outrageous to say the least. My questions have not been answered to date. This week I received an email from another desperate family. It states:

*I have a child with cerebral palsy, vision impairment and developmental delays. He is very dependent on us and our lives are challenging but this story is actually about my cousin's little boy who suffers from autism. It was apparent from the age of about one that his concentration was very limited and he was eventually diagnosed with autism. There are many, many tragic events that the family have had to endure such as erratic behaviour, broken windows, broken walls and unfortunately he now hits out at people at the age of 10.*

*Four years ago, my cousin and his family was forced out of suburbia by neighbours as his son was causing distress to them by constant yelling and throwing of objects over the fence. They purchased land in the hills and built a home for their family so he had 'room to move'. This was effective for a while but as he gets older his tantrums are also growing. He has now caused substantial damage to the home and surroundings. My aunty and uncle are fortunate enough to be in a financially secure situation so they have offered to purchase land for my cousin's family in the middle of nowhere so they can build a shed furnished with basic necessities so they can relax on weekends without the worry of more damage. To make matters worse their respite funding has been cut and any respite they do have carers don't want to return as he is too hard for them to manage.*

*We need more and better respite—not a couple of hours here and there. As it is, we are expected to schedule well in advance when we think we will be falling apart emotionally, physically, and mentally. What on earth would happen if we all handed our 'special' children like these over to the government?!! We love our children but we need a better partnership if we are going to keep these children living in the community.*

My questions to the minister are:

1. What is the budget allocation for goods and services for families with a disabled child?

2. What does that money equate to per head?
3. How are families' needs assessed and evaluated to determine whether they deserve those goods and services?
4. How does the current budget allocation compare with the years 2002 to 2004?
5. Will the minister investigate this urgent matter and the one raised on 4 June 2009 and provide an answer before the end of this session of parliament?

**The Hon. G.E. GAGO** (Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy) (15:44): I thank the honourable member for her questions and will refer them to the Minister for Families and Communities in another place and bring back a response.