



Media Release

BILL SHORTEN MP

**Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services
Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction**

Friday, December 4, 2009

Oakdale Services hosts Successful Forum on Ageing and Disability

Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities, Bill Shorten, has visited Hobart to attend a forum on Ageing and Disability organised by Oakdale Services Tasmania, a provider of accommodation for people with disability.

Mr Shorten said the forum was a great opportunity to listen to the concerns of people in the sector, and that are facing people with disability as they grow older.

Mr Shorten said he was grateful to Tasmanian Senator Catryna Bilyk for inviting him to the forum.

"Senator Bilyk is a strong advocate for the rights of Tasmanians with disability, and is working hard to ensure they get their fair share of services," Mr Shorten said.

Attended by over 100 people, the forum brought together key stakeholders in the Aged and Disability Sectors, together with people with a disability, their families and carers, federal and state politicians, professionals, and government representatives.

"Australia is growing older and we need to prepare for the fact that our population with disabilities is growing older as well," Mr Shorten said.

"As people with disability age their needs change, and we have to start thinking about the best way to provide them with accommodation, support and opportunities to socialise and enjoy life."

"The forum today has given me an insight into some of the challenges we are facing."

Attendees at the forum raised concerns about the lack of eligibility for "ageing in place programs" for people with disability in supported accommodation.

Mr Shorten said that changes were necessary in the way Australia funded disability services.

He said that last week's announcement by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd that the Federal Government would ask the Productivity Commission to undertake a study into new approaches for funding and delivering long-term disability care and support, was an exciting development.

The study will examine the costs and benefits of replacing the current system of disability services with a new approach which provides long-term essential care and support for people with severe or profound disabilities however acquired, and will look at the possibility of a no-fault insurance scheme.

“I hope this study will eventually lead to a better system for people with disability, which offers long-term care based on an individual’s needs as well as better early intervention,” Mr Shorten said.

Oakdale Services is a not-for-profit company which operates services for people with disability across the greater Hobart area, employing nearly 100 staff.