

NICK DAMETTO
Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

26/11/2019

Parking for vision impaired a step closer

KATTER'S Australian Party MPs have welcomed a State Government Bill that will give Queensland's vision-impaired community the right to apply for a disability parking permit.

Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto said the government's Transport Legislation Disability Parking and Other Matters Amendment Bill 2019 was effectively an endorsement of his own Transport Legislation (Disability Parking Permit Scheme) Amendment Bill 2019 which was introduced in parliament last month.

"Today's move by the government to introduce their own Bill in parliament will add significant clout to our own efforts to make these legislative changes," he said.

"This is a very important step for disability advocates and the vision impaired community who have been fighting for this change for years. It is good to see the government is finally listening."

The new Bill's introduction follows a relentless advocacy campaign by Guide Dogs Queensland, Hill MP Shane Knuth and Mr Dametto to change the laws governing who qualifies for a disability parking permit in Queensland, resulting in Mr Dametto introducing his own Bill into parliament.

"I understand the government's Bill will include further explanation between a temporary and permanent vision impairment and will also beef up fines for people who misuse disability parking spaces," Mr Dametto said.

"I'm honoured to have had the support of people like Hailey and Chayd Brown and Taylor Blennerhassett, whose children have vision impairments. They gave me the inspiration I needed to take this fight right to the government. I could never fathom how the rules could be so discriminatory and now we are closer to an outcome they deserve."

Mr Dametto praised the long-standing advocacy of Mr Knuth on the issue, as well Guide Dogs Queensland, who were instrumental in helping to develop the Bill.

"Shane has long been fighting for a legislative change and had been strongly lobbying Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey," Mr Dametto said.

"Guide Dogs Queensland are at the coalface when it comes to knowing the issues their clients face on a daily basis with vision-impairment. I can't say thanks enough for their endorsement of my Bill and involvement in a discussion we hosted at parliament house last month to draw attention to the issue."

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Hill MP Shane Knuth said after nearly two years of lobbying he was pleased the government was showing initiative by acknowledging the vision-impaired require parking permits.

Mr Knuth said he was first disappointed with the initial response by the Minister when he raised the issue in Parliament in 2017 but was pleased to see further pressure put on the government when Mr Dametto tabled his Transport Legislation (Disability Parking Permit Scheme) Amendment Bill 2019.

"We hope that this will be a game changer for the vision impaired. I have witnessed for myself the struggles they face on a daily basis," Mr Knuth said.

Mr Knuth and Mr Dametto recently met with Guide Dogs Queensland and vision impaired at Parliament where they walked in a blindfold with a cane and guide dog, experiencing the difficulties someone who is vision impaired faces.

Mr Dametto said there was no reason why any MP should not support both Bills.

"A simple criterion change like this will help improve the quality of life for vision-impaired persons by making day-to-day movements safer and more dignified," he said.

"Let's make it happen."

—ENDS—

Photo captions:

Traeger MP Robbie Katter, Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto, Guide Dogs Queensland client Rhett Bryant and his guide dog Jeffrey, Guide Dogs Queensland general manager Jock Beveridge and Hill MP Shane Knuth during last month's Disability Parking Reform Discussion held at parliament house, hosted by Mr Dametto.

A photograph of Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto, Guide Dogs Queensland client Rhett Bryant and his Guide Dog Jeffrey during last month's Disability Parking Reform Discussion held at parliament house, hosted by Mr Dametto.

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Media Enquiries

Nick Dametto, Member for Hinchinbrook

Michael Serenc – 0423 108 848

Shane Knuth, Member for Hill

Katje Gibson – 0409 725 466