




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 15 November 2018

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.14 pm): I rise to address the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report with respect to its oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission, report No. 16 of the 56th Parliament. The purpose and functions of the Queensland Family and Child Commission are very important. This very important commission was established in 2014, with a strategic purpose to promote the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children, and also to ensure their best interests are served. Its other purpose is obviously to ensure child protection processes are enhanced and further developed in Queensland. It is very important that we protect our most vulnerable.

We know that the Palaszczuk Labor government has a woeful track record when it comes to child protection. Certainly the former minister for child safety, the member for Waterford, had a significant number of issues and problems in relation to managing the department. There were delays with data and report releases during the last term of the 55th Parliament. There were many serious and significant instances of failures that occurred under her watch.

This is not the first time that Labor has failed with respect to its management of child safety. We only need to look back to 7 February 2014 when the then premier, Peter Beattie, called a snap election. At the time, his government was rocked by the report of the then Crime and Misconduct Commission that found that Labor had failed to adequately protect children in foster care from abuse. Labor always fails when it comes to transparent and accountable government in Queensland, not only in relation to child safety but also in terms of what we are seeing in the health system, the rail fail debacle, the economic problems that have been clearly articulated today and crime spiralling out of control in many parts of Queensland.

There are some very sobering statistics in the annual report, particularly with respect to sexual harm to children. That is very confronting and very disturbing for myself as the shadow minister for communities and state member for Moggill. It is extraordinary that the current Labor minister for child safety, the member for Bulimba, continues to claim that the child safety system is improving when the data says the exact opposite. Tomorrow we could see many of our child safety work sites go on strike. In fact, as the shadow minister, the member for Burnett, has indicated, potentially 25 work sites will go on strike from tomorrow.

It is simply not acceptable that in Queensland we see such harms continuing to occur to vulnerable children. There needs to be a cultural change. As the LNP shadow minister for communities, from reading this report and looking at the work that the committee has done, I would say that we need our community leaders and political representatives from all levels of government to work together, in collaboration with a range of organisations, to ensure that our children are protected. That needs to occur in each and every community across Queensland in a comprehensive and collaborative manner. I encourage those members of the House who have not read the report to read it, because many things contained in the report will be applicable to their communities.

I acknowledge the staff and the work of the Queensland Family and Child Commission. Certainly they are doing some terrific work in relation to cyber safety. There have been recommendations in relation to blue cards and what needs to occur in our foster system in Queensland. I think all of the work that the commission has done to date has been very important. Certainly much more needs to occur into the future. Protecting our most vulnerable children and those who are in care in each and every community across Queensland is very important. I commend the report to the House.