



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

Hansard 18 October 2000

FORDE INQUIRY

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (11.13 p.m.): When it comes to services for children, this Government lacks goals and adequate focus for services. This is supported by the report of September 2000 to the Parliament by the Government's own Forde Implementation Monitoring Committee. The report comes after the Beattie Labor Government has been in office for more than two years and highlights the can't do attitude of this Beattie Government. In more than two years, the Government has not even been able to decide what it wants to achieve for Queensland's young people. Furthermore, the Forde Implementation Monitoring Committee has identified that the Government is deficient in the areas of data collection, performance monitoring and complaints processing. In other words, not only has the Government failed to identify what it should be doing, it cannot even produce figures to adequately show what it is providing and the level of dissatisfaction in the community with its services. Taken together, these two observations are an absolute indictment of the Government. It sets up a high-profile inquiry at huge expense to Queensland taxpayers, receives the recommendations from the inquiry with great fanfare, makes grandiose claims to implement all but one of these recommendations and in fact is found out by the umpire to be doing no such thing.

Even in areas where there has been some specific undertaking to act, the inability of this Government to get things done is pathetically evident. Surely the humiliation of this Government in respect of services to young people must be complete in the face of these findings. What it says is that, even in those cases where the inquiry reported in such detail as to spell out what needed to be done, that is, where the objective of the proposed change was identified for the Government, this Government is not even capable of working out a time frame for the needed reform. It cannot so much as work out how long it will take it to carry out a specified administrative task. That is pathetic.

I do not intend to elaborate on the committee's continuing area of concern in relation to recommendations 2 and 3. Suffice to say that the bumbling ineptitude of the Government in having the tragic past of some people aired and relived during the inquiry and having their hopes and expectations raised by the recommendations of the inquiry and then dashed by Government inaction is cause for shame on the part of those charged with responsibility of implementing those recommendations. We on this side of the House are not prepared to use the personal tragedies of Queenslanders for political gain, but the Minister and the Government know just what depth of personal distress some of those involved have gone through during and since that inquiry. This Government must take responsibility for what it has done and for what it has failed to do in relation to those people.

I note further the committee's comments in relation to the Government's failure in relation to recommendation No. 26. The report of this committee stands as part of the mounting volume of evidence that this Beattie Labor Government is simply not up to the task of Government in a modern democracy.

In one of the other key areas of social policy, an equally stinging criticism was published earlier this year. The March 2000 edition of the Journal of the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Inc. carried an editorial that was a powerful rebuke of the Beattie Labor Government's failure to consult in any realistic way with stakeholders in the community. We all know about the claims of consultation that are trotted out with each piece of legislation whenever it is convenient for Government to make such claims. But how does the Minister answer the director's observation in that editorial that—

"... this piece of reform has caught many in the community and in the non government (and government) sector on the hop, and has chagrined at the lack of notice that this move was on the cards."

She goes on to make other criticisms relating to the lack of identified resources to operationalise this reform.

It is the same story over and over again. Loads of talk but no consultation. Plenty of promises but no funds to implement them. New services but no more people to provide those services. The editor drives home the point—

"... the issue of lack of resources lies on the lap of the government and no-one else's. Let's not lose sight of whom we should be holding accountable."

These are the reported and documented views of people who are far from being antagonistic towards a Labor Government, yet it is these people who have looked objectively at the performance of this Government and of this Minister and have delivered these damning judgments on the Beattie Government's failure to meet even the basic standards of competence in the administration of the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care in Queensland. There are reports and rhetoric, but one only has to scratch the surface to see that this is a Government that is chronically incompetent. The Beattie Labor Government can make claims and laugh off Government shortfalls and incompetence, but it is simply a can't do Government.
