



Speech by

**CHRIS CUMMINS**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Hansard 11 September 2003

**CHILD PROTECTION [INTERNATIONAL MEASURES] BILL**

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (3.42 p.m.): I am very pleased to be able to speak to the Child Protection (International Measures) Bill 2003 as this bill provides for a simple mechanism for foster carers and licensed care services to voluntarily surrender their approvals or licences rather than requiring them to go through a formal cancellation process. I believe that the vast majority of foster carers are dedicated, good-hearted people. Recently—I think it was about two weekends ago—on the Sunshine Coast many of these people were presented with certificates when the Beattie cabinet came to the Sunshine Coast for a community cabinet. I applaud the government for initiating those certificates. It is a very worthwhile exercise to acknowledge the great work that these kind-hearted people do.

These amendments are part of the government's ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety of children generally and, in particular, our most vulnerable children—children in care. It is no secret that these amendments will assist in better achieving the purpose of the Child Protection Act 1999—to protect children from harm. We recognise that this minister and her department not only face various challenges but they are also determined to overcome them.

I am very proud to be a strong supporter not only of the minister but also of the staff of the department who work through many of the issues. I am fully aware that over many years, probably due to a lack of funding and a lack of recognition, the department has received too many criticisms. A lot of them will be exposed and it will be a very difficult time for a lot of people. But there has to be a healing process and there has to be a commitment from this government. I sincerely believe that we have indicated that we have given that commitment and will give it in the future. In saying that, I commend the minister for drawing the attention not only of the government but also of the people of Queensland to the hurdles and issues that are before us. I commend the minister and her department and I commend the bill to the House.