



Speech by

**Hon. JUDY SPENCE**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT GRAVATT**

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Hansard 11 September 2003

**CHILD PROTECTION [INTERNATIONAL MEASURES] BILL**

**Hon. J. C. SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors) (3.51 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members who participated in this debate. I thank the opposition for its support for this legislation. It is fitting that the Queensland parliament should debate the Child Protection (International Measures) Bill during Child Protection Week.

I understand that this bill has been a long time in the making. In fact, it has taken eight years for the states, territories and Commonwealth to put this piece of legislation together. I acknowledge that one of the officers in the department—our senior legal officer, Mr Mark Healey—has been at the forefront of putting this bill together for the last eight years. I know that he personally is very satisfied to see it being passed today.

The member for Beaudesert asked about how this legislation is being implemented in other Australian jurisdictions. As has been mentioned by many speakers, the convention came into force on 1 August this year. This model legislation, which it has taken eight years to put together, has been already passed by the Tasmanian parliament. So we are the second parliament in Australia to pass this legislation. However, all states and territories have agreed to implement the convention using this model legislation as a basis for their laws.

I think all speakers have acknowledged that we are seeing more international child protection cases come into our jurisdiction. In fact, per year we average five to 10 cases in which there is an international aspect. While the number of child protection matters is not high, it is expected that the number will grow over time with increasing global mobility. International matters more often arise in the Family Court. It is expected that the bulk of cases will fall within that jurisdiction. But the convention relates to both family law and child protection matters, and legislation by the states is required to fully implement the convention in Australia.

The two broad types of cases that have arisen in the past are where child protection concerns arise in relation to foreign children present here in Queensland and where child protection concerns arise in relation to Queensland children who are taken overseas. Obviously there has been a need for this type of legislation for some time. I am pleased to see that all honourable members have a good understanding of what this means and are supporting the legislation. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.