



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Thursday, 9 June 2005

CHILD SAFETY

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.23 am): Child safety in Queensland is in turmoil. In fact, it has got worse—not better—under this government, despite its statements about what it was going to do. On the Sunshine Coast we have seen job cutbacks for child safety officers. This has caused great distress to the families involved and, obviously, to the staff at the forefront of this very difficult job.

What is extremely damnable is that this government is reworking the lists and taking children who have been notified to the department off those lists in order to make the lists look good. These children are being recategorised and removed from lists which are cases that require investigation and the circumstances investigated. They have been notified to the government and, in order to make the wait list look better, they have been taken off the wait list.

I know that this happens not just on the Sunshine Coast. I do know that this has happened on the Sunshine Coast. This puts children's lives at risk. It is typical of this government that talks about wanting to make a difference, but it cannot manage the most basic of issues. If we do not protect children we are really letting down the most vulnerable members of our community.

The workers who have been at the forefront and have had their jobs terminated have talked of their distress. I have talked to parents who are working with those case workers. They have been left in limbo. They had support from those workers and now they are in situations where they do not know whether there will be adequate case workers to carry on into the future. But to have the children downgraded by the stroke of a pen, which means that there will not be a real investigation of the notification that has brought them to the attention of the department, is unacceptable and damnable. I believe that it is putting the lives of children at risk.