



Speech by

# Hon. Desley Boyle

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2007

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Child Protection Week

**Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety) (10.11 am): Next Monday marks the official launch of Child Protection Week. The launch will be held at St James College, Spring Hill, where staff and students run a brekky van for the homeless. There will be a series of other events throughout the state. Why do we go to the trouble of having Child Protection Week every year? Because, sadly, there are too many Queensland children being abused. We have over 7,300 children in out-of-home care in Queensland right now and the number is rising. That is similarly the case in other states and other western countries.

Why is it that child abuse is more prevalent in today's society when children have more opportunities than ever before, better health, better prosperity? However, they also face more uncertainties and risks. They face earlier exposure to sexual activity, drugs and alcohol. There are more single parents and more divorces. More women are in the workforce and family life is more complex.

While that may be a general explanation it does not always apply and it is no excuse. Looking after children is not actually in essence so very hard. What kids need is pretty simple. They need food, a bed to sleep in and lots of cuddles. They need to go to school, they need to be protected from violence and kept away from drugs and alcohol.

In fact, trauma experts say that there is one thing above all others that a child who has been abused needs—that is, for that child to have an adult in his or her life who looks at him or her with unconditional positive regard. Every Queensland child should have at least one adult who is regularly in their life, who is genuinely pleased to see them, who believes them to be good and capable with a great life ahead. That person can be a neighbour, a schoolteacher, a sporting coach, the lady who runs the tuckshop at school. It is a reminder that child protection is everyone's business. That is why we have Child Protection Week each year.