



Speech by
Ted Malone

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Hansard Tuesday, 4 September 2007

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILD GUARDIAN AMENDMENT BILL

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (3.04 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Amendment Bill. I do not intend to speak at any great length to the bill. Certainly, we on this side of the House support the bill.

I think it is important that we all recognise—and I am sure we all do—the sanctity of our young people and certainly the young people and children we have in our care. In this place we pass the legislation by which we all are governed. Hopefully, we bring forward good legislation in respect to the people we are here to protect, and that is our young people.

Nowadays we live in a very complex society. Unfortunately, there are some in our society who do not see it quite as clearly as we do. It is really important that we have very strong safeguards for the protection of our young people.

I commend the minister for bringing forward this bill. I indicate that I particularly—as I think would most of us on this side of the House—would be happy to move even further in terms of photo ID and some other measures that may or may not be applicable at this time. Certainly, whatever can be done in terms of legislative review I believe we should do.

The bill's objective is to clarify the blue card screening requirements for individuals and businesses supplying health and counselling support services to children. As the member for Toowoomba South indicated, a wide variety of people supply services to young people—and more so nowadays in terms of footy coaches, trainers, and even taxicab operators. The blue card system has to be reasonably simple to access and there should be a reasonably quick turnaround time in which a blue card is issued so that people are not discouraged from applying for the card.

Nowadays we are seeing more and more opportunities for mentors to come into our schools and talk to students, not necessarily about what happened in years gone by but in terms of lifting students' expectations of their careers and to talk about pathways by which students can achieve in their community. I refer particularly to the skilling centre at Sarina. The minister is aware of what is happening there. Of course, I will raise the matter of the kindergarten again. There are real opportunities, not just in Sarina but right throughout Queensland, for people who have real concerns and who want to support our students to be asked to come into our schools and talk to students, and they are doing that willingly. If it is an imposition for those people to gain a blue card, to a certain extent it discourages them from going into schools.

Of course, 99.9 per cent of people will obtain a blue card without any hassle at all. Obviously, in terms of gaining a blue card we cannot foretell who in our community, who have not yet been convicted of a crime, will go under the radar. I know we try to pick those people out but, unfortunately in the case of the blue card, people who are not convicted of a crime will never be detected until they do commit a crime. I am not sure I am smart enough or willing enough to put forward any ideas on how we get around that, but obviously that is one of the pitfalls.

The shadow minister has made an impassioned speech in regard to the bill. We all support the issue and I commend the bill to the House.