




Speech By  
**Rob Molhoek**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Child Protection**

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (3.00 pm): Last Friday, I was pleased to attend the annual Bravehearts ThankShoe lunch—a wonderful chance for the staff at Bravehearts to say thanks to their many dedicated supporters and reflect on their achievements over the past year. I particularly want to acknowledge Hetty Johnston and Carol Ronken and the team at Bravehearts for all their hard work. As members know, on 1 July last year the LNP government announced a commission of inquiry into child protection in Queensland. Since then, the federal government has followed suit and announced a royal commission into child protection and institutional care. Although I am no longer the assistant minister for child safety, my passion for child protection is extremely strong and I will continue to work with Bravehearts and the government to make Queensland the safest place in Australia to raise a child.

The federal commission has been asked to review institutional responses to allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse and related matters. 'Institution' has been defined as—

... any public or private body, agency, association, club, institution, organisation or other entity or group of entities ... does not include the family.

Although I am pleased that this inquiry is taking place to address some serious systemic failings in Australian institutions, there is so much more that needs to be done to address the issue of abuse both inside and outside institutions. The Australian Institute of Criminology found that 11 per cent of abused children under the age of 15 were abused by a stranger. This is the smallest group of children offended against by perpetrators. Thirty per cent of children were sexually abused by a male relative other than the victim's father or stepfather, 16 per cent of children were abused by a family friend, 15 per cent of children were abused by an acquaintance or a neighbour, 15 per cent of children were abused by another person and 13 per cent of children were abused by the father or a stepfather. It is absolutely crucial that this inquiry extend beyond the investigation of children in institutional care.

Last Friday, I was pleased to stand with the minister, Tracy Davis, and we were both honoured to accept, on behalf of the Queensland government, a platinum ThankShoe award from Bravehearts for the state government's work in supporting a number of significant initiatives, such as the new two-strikes policy that was introduced last year—some of the toughest legislation for child sex offenders in Australia—and then just this week we passed further legislation in respect of child grooming, exploitation and dangerous drugs.

I also want to pay tribute to some other award recipients: to the von Bibra family from Southport—Warren, Sally and their son, Wade—who, through their motor dealership, are raising money to support Bravehearts and I could not let the moment pass without acknowledging Claude Harvey, the mower man, who has raised over \$500,000 pushing a lawnmower for this incredible charity.