




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2015

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.06 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak in favour of the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill. It is relevant to so many areas of my portfolio, but in particular I want to talk about the role this bill will play in tackling domestic and family violence. As the Treasurer and the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships stated in his explanatory speech, the objects of the Family Responsibilities Commission—

... are to support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in welfare reform community areas and to help community members resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their community and the individuals and families of the community.

Currently, there are four triggers for the commission to consider the convening of a conference with relevant community members: a child not attending or not enrolled in school; a child safety report is made; a person is convicted of an offence before the court, including the Childrens Court; a tenancy agreement is breached or the premises are used for an illegal purpose.

As minister with lead responsibility for the government's actions to tackle domestic and family violence, I am particularly pleased that domestic violence is now being added as a trigger. This was a recommendation of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland in the *Not now, not ever* report. Recommendation 93 suggested that courts be required to notify the Family Responsibilities Commission when a protection order is made naming a welfare reform community resident as the respondent. Family responsibilities commissioners will be provided with training to understand the nature and dynamics of domestic and family violence and to ensure that any response or intervention always prioritises victim safety. This is a further step in delivering on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to implementing all 140 of the recommendations in *Not now, not ever*. We know that the impact of domestic and family violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities is a major concern for Indigenous leaders and elders. We are committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to prevent violence and address the trauma caused by domestic and family violence. The involvement of the Family Responsibilities Commission is part of this approach. We know that there is a need also for the provision of early intervention support for families, addressing the over-representation of Indigenous children in our child protection system and tackling domestic violence which underpins so many problems within families.

Since coming to office we have rolled out Family and Child Connect services, connecting struggling families with the services they need, and intensive family support services, which provides in-depth support for families with multiple problems at risk of crisis. These new services are part of an overall aim of prevention and helping to give families the support they need so children do not end up in our child protection system.

The first Family and Child Connect specifically for Indigenous families in Brisbane will be set up by mid next year. The first Indigenous led Family and Child Connect was set up in July by the Kummara Association. This provides help to the whole community, not specifically Indigenous families.

We have also provided \$2.4 million over three years to the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, QATSICPP, to work on capacity building so we can have more Indigenous led organisations working within our child protection system supporting families. Across government we are working with Indigenous communities to support families and vulnerable people.