




Speech By  
**David Janetzki**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH**

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### **CHILD PROTECTION (MANDATORY REPORTING—MASON'S LAW) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (9.53 pm): I rise to briefly contribute to the debate on the bill. The tragic circumstances of the death of Mason Parker are well known and have been canvassed tonight. There is nothing to be gained from me traversing those horrific and heartbreaking facts once again. The tributes paid to Mason's grandparents, the Sandemans, most movingly by the member for Hinchinbrook, are testament to their courage and persistence in pursuing this issue through to tonight.

Mandatory reporting provisions, which today are contained in the Child Protection Act, were introduced over 30 years ago in a variety of pieces of legislation but were initially introduced in the 1980s to necessitate medical practitioners to report cases of suspected harm. Over the years, those provisions were extended to include registered nurses and school staff who would report relevant information to the police through certain prescribed persons. Most recently, the LNP government consolidated the various mandatory reporting provisions in the Child Protection Act, which has now become a single point of legislative reference.

During the recent Toowoomba South by-election campaign, it became very obvious that the Toowoomba community is deeply concerned about community safety and, in particular, child safety. I had occasion to spend time with childcare centre operators and owners throughout the electorate. The shadow minister, the member for Aspley, who has been the driving force and energy behind the bill we are debating tonight, and I visited one such early childhood centre, A Country Garden Childhood Centre, to discuss the proposed legislative changes contained in Mason's bill. The owner-operator of the centre, Mr Mark Naug, strongly supports the principles contained in this bill. In fact, during the election campaign the childcare centre operators throughout Toowoomba that I spoke with were strongly supportive of the protective aspects that this bill seeks to introduce.

Early childhood centre operators and owners work day and night to ensure the safety of the children entrusted to their care. A parent or carer can entrust no more valuable and precious a possession to others than their own children. Early childhood education and care professionals are highly trained and cognisant of their many responsibilities. Now, with the introduction of this bill, they have a clear obligation to mandatorily report cases of suspected harm.

It is because of the seriousness with which childcare workers take their training responsibilities that it is appropriate to extend the time in which the early childhood education and care sector must comply with the changes proposed by the parliamentary committee reviewing the bill. The mandatory reporting of suspected harm by the early childhood education and care sector will lead to a safer Queensland for our children, which is an objective that everyone in this House can agree on.