




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Minister for Child Safety

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (10.39 am): Yet again I rise in this House to highlight the grave failures of the embattled Minister for Child Safety. Yet again we have more damning evidence that the child safety system throughout the state is in crisis. Yet again we see a minister so desperate to cling on to her portfolio that she fails to even acknowledge critical issues in her own department. Yet again we see Queensland children suffering as a result. For too long we have seen the Minister for Child Safety spinning the figures any which way in her attempt to hide the damage done under her leadership of this critical department. This time the leaked October performance data shows a system falling deeper and deeper into crisis as it continues to buckle under this minister. Worst of all, until recently this minister claimed this data did not even exist or that it was not readily available. After looking at this data we can see why. The data shows call centres assessing calls of suspected abuse are being swamped because the cases are not even graded. Thousands of cases are not being assessed each month, with October's data showing about 3,000 reports of abuse into child safety call centres around the state being left open awaiting assessment. Hundreds of cases were left open. Fifteen per cent of urgent cases requiring a 24-hour response were missed. Only one per cent of 10-day responses in the south-east was actioned in time. In the Far North, 34 per cent of urgent cases were not dealt with in time.

Each one of those numbers is a child at risk in Queensland right now, waiting for Child Safety to come knocking. Under this minister's watch, how many children are being abused as we speak, waiting for cases to make their way to a child safety officer? Of course, we have the tragic case of Mason Jet Lee. Queenslanders deserve to know the truth and time has run out for the minister, who continually hides behind reviews. It should not take opposition RTIs to force this secretive Labor government to reveal critical information into the goings-on in Child Safety. Today we have the thought bubble from the minister regarding changes to a child safety procedure that already exists. Mandatory drug testing would not have saved Mason Jet Lee, given that he was never sighted by a child safety officer before an intervention with parental agreement was taken out. The minister cannot guarantee—

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I rise to a point of order. I have a concern about a matter that is being raised in the House that is before the criminal court in this state. Mr Speaker, I ask that you provide some guidance to the member.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, can you assure me that your comments are not sub judice?

Ms BATES: I can. I am talking about the department's processes.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, while you might be talking about the department process, my advice is that those are matters currently before the court. I urge you to refrain from making those comments.

Ms BATES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will go on. The minister cannot guarantee children will not be left with drug addict parents even after the parents test positive, as it will be left to individual case officers to decide. When is this minister going to take responsibility? When will this minister put the child safety system before her career? Meanwhile, we see horrifying reports that, under this minister's watch, in remote communities girls as young as 12 are being fitted with contraceptive implants. That is a dangerous practice. What has this minister done? Absolutely nothing! The big questions remain: how many of those young girls are known to Child Safety, how many more children will be harmed under this minister and how many more failures will be—

(Time expired)