



Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Child Protection Week

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.10 am): Next week Queenslanders will come together to celebrate Child Protection Week. On Sunday, both City Hall and King George Square will be lit up blue to mark its commencement. This year there is even more reason to celebrate as we mark the 30th anniversary of this important week in Queensland. I would like to thank Act for Kids and the Child Protection Week committee for organising this important week. I would particularly like to thank committee chair Elisabeth Kobierski and Act for Kids ambassador Kay McGrath for their tireless work.

Activities will be held across the state to help raise awareness that child protection is a shared responsibility and we all have a role to play in keeping children safe. Later today I will be joining a number of my parliamentary colleagues at the annual Child Protection Week awards. The ceremony gives us an opportunity to reflect on the excellent work being done in Queensland to strengthen families and keep children safe. People who choose to work in the child protection sector are dedicated to improving the lives of Queensland's most vulnerable children and young people. On that note, I want to pay tribute to my department's hardworking Child Safety staff. As I said at budget time, we already have 166 more front-line and front-line support staff than we did two years ago. By the end of this year my department will have reprioritised an additional 40 front-line and front-line support staff to child safety and family support. In addition, we will soon commence an independent analysis of demand and resource allocation to inform future deployments. This will give us a clear road map to address pressures and reduce Child Safety officer workloads.

It is important to recognise that support for families is not just contained to roles within government. The Palaszczuk government's record investment to support children and families and to prevent domestic and family violence means that hundreds of front-line jobs are being created in the community sector. Since coming to office we have created more than 230 new jobs. Over the next two years we will create another 400 jobs in our Family and Child Connect services, Intensive Family Support services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing services, domestic and family violence prevention and support services and, of course, our neighbourhood centres. This builds on the Community Services Industry Alliance's *Forecasting the future* report from April which predicted more than 20,000 jobs will be created in the community services sector as it grows over the next decade. I am proud that the Palaszczuk government is leading the way by restoring services and investing in jobs that support vulnerable Queenslanders.