



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

---

Record of Proceedings, 29 November 2016

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Child Protection**

 **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) (10.13 am): Building a stronger child protection system is my highest priority. Today I can announce that I will be requiring parents who consent to an intervention parental agreement with the department of child safety to undergo mandatory and random drug testing if there is any suspicion of drug use. There are currently 19,037 children subject to an IPA in Queensland where parents have agreed to work with Child Safety to ensure their kids are properly cared for at home. Today I have announced a zero tolerance measure that puts the safety of children first and foremost.

Right across the state Child Safety workers are telling me that drugs, in particular ice, are an increasing challenge to their work, undermining their efforts to work successfully with families. They tell me that more and more parents are using ice and it is impacting on the family's ability to keep kids safe. We know that ice is a problem right across Queensland. It presents a real challenge not just to police and our health workers but also to our Child Safety officers when it comes to making an assessment about whether or not parents are up to the job of looking after their children safely. In fact, over the past eight years the number of families staff work with who have a problem with drugs or alcohol has increased from 47 per cent to 65 per cent. This is why we are now requiring parents to agree to mandatory random drug testing as a precondition for entering into an intervention with parental agreement with my department. This is about keeping kids safe. If mum and dad are not up to the job because they are using drugs, then we must take action. This will give our hardworking Child Safety officers another tool to use when making the assessment and will help them make the right decisions to keep kids safe. The safety of children has to be our highest priority.

I am rebuilding the child protection system in Queensland. I am recruiting an additional 129 front-line staff this financial year, with nearly all of them to be in place by January.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! The minister is making a ministerial statement. She is not being provocative. I urge the member for Kawana.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** There are an additional 129 full-time staff, of whom most will be in place by January. Every day I am demanding more from my department, as we all should, on investigation and assessment time frames, and the early signs are promising. We have not backed away from implementing all of the recommendations from the commission of inquiry—in fact, all of them are underway—and we have a record investment in early intervention and prevention to keep families safely together before small problems become big problems. In fact, 15,000 Queensland families have accessed our Family and Child Connect services, more than 20,000 Queenslanders have signed up to the free Triple P parenting course and, of course, we are calling on each and every one of us in the

community to play their part with a \$2 million campaign to make child safety everyone's business, because raising a child takes a village and all Queensland kids deserve a safe and happy childhood where they can reach their full potential.