




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 18 February 2016

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Safe Schools Coalition

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (10.15 am): Let me say from the very beginning that bullying in schools is totally unacceptable, whether it is bullying around race, gender, disability or sexual identity. It is appropriate that we have programs in schools that help us eliminate bullying. There is a program at the moment that is being rolled out right across this state that is causing grave concerns for many parents. The Safe Schools Coalition is a federally funded program that was introduced in the dying days of the Rudd government that claims to provide resources and training for schools to help tackle homophobic behaviour. Concerned parents have contacted me, and I believe every MP in this House, about their concerns about the details of this particular program. They are concerned about young children being exposed to adult concepts. This resource material refers primary school aged children to websites that talk about concepts like cross-dressing, genital tucking for boys and chest binding for girls. In fact, when it talks about chest binding it warns the kids to be careful because it could be fatal if it is done in the incorrect manner.

Mr Cramp interjected.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gaven and Minister for Education, please no debate across the chamber.

Mr MANDER: I share the concern of the head of child psychiatry from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Mr Nick Kowalenko, who warns about the age appropriateness of this type of material. Of even greater concern is that parental permission or notification is not required for the children to be exposed to these resources. Continuing this veil of secrecy, the Safe Schools Coalition, despite listing every other school that is participating in the nation, will not list the schools in Queensland. We do know that there are 27 schools. We do know that three of those schools are primary schools, seven of those schools are P-12 schools and the remainder are secondary.

I asked the minister about this program during estimates and subsequently wrote to her about the program. Her reply abrogates all responsibility from herself and directs it to the federal government. This program is being rolled out in Queensland schools. I call on the minister to review this immediately and rule out following what their Victorian counterparts have done, which is mandate this program for all schools by 2019.