



Speech By
Tracy Davis

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 18 February 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Child Protection

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (6.54 pm): In Queensland we are extremely fortunate to have a child protection workforce that does its job well. These are some of the most dedicated people I have ever had the privilege to meet. It can be a tough job on the front line.

Following the miserable failings of successive former Labor governments, the LNP government worked hard to turn around the child protection system. The LNP took the initiative to develop new and radically different approaches to the protection of children. It was important that these landmark changes moved us from the overburdened and unsustainable Labor managed system to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

When the LNP left government in January last year, the tertiary child protection system had significantly improved. Response times for reported concerns had improved dramatically, as did many other measures that historically backlogged the department's workload. We provided this Labor government with the solid footing to get it right.

But after only one year into this government's term, we are seeing statutory response time frames blowing out. The government's own data shows this alarming trend in the last nine months of 2015. These statistics were further revealed in the latest Report on Government Services, where it was reported that in 2015 more than 8,500 Queensland children waited 29 days or more for investigations to start once a complaint was made. That is the worst result across all states and territories in Australia and it is more evidence that the system is slipping backwards to the mishandled ways of former Labor governments. I urge the minister to get across this part of her portfolio, get her finger on the pulse and put the safety of vulnerable children in Queensland first.

While I am on my feet, I am also calling on the Attorney-General to explain why she is delaying the public release of the Queensland Law Reform Commission's review report into child protection mandatory reporting laws for the early childhood education and care sector. In December last year the Labor government received this report and recommendations and I can see no conceivable reason it will not release it. It is most upsetting that this Labor government has not shown one ounce of compassion to Mr John and Mrs Sue Sandeman, the Queensland grandparents who lobbied hard for these laws to change following the murder of their beloved grandson, Mason, in 2011. During my time as minister, I met with Mr and Mrs Sandeman and spoke to them on a number of occasions. This wonderful couple are absolutely committed to improving the child protection system. Apart from a letter from a deputy chief of staff, no-one from the Palaszczuk government, including local Labor MPs in Townsville, have personally reached out to these grandparents since the report was finalised. Like the rest of Queensland, the Sandemans have been left in the dark while this Labor government sits frozen at the wheel. I call on the Attorney-General to release the report immediately.