




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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**CHILD PROTECTION (MANDATORY REPORTING—MASON'S LAW)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (10.23 pm), in reply: Can I start by thanking all members who participated in tonight's debate. I expect that John and Sue Sandeman have been extremely heartened that members here tonight have joined together to ensure that this very important bill goes through the House tonight. I think they will be a little bit embarrassed by the kind words that have been expressed by members in the chamber. For those of us who have had the very great privilege of getting to know John and Sue, these sorts of accolades will not sit very well with them because they are doing this for their little grandson. They are doing this for all children who cannot speak for themselves to have the protections that they need into the future.

I am also really heartened by both sides coming together to make sure that the journey which John and Sue have undertaken over these 5½ years is not in vain. The member for Gregory in his contribution talked about the things that are really important that we come into this House with as parliamentarians and the things that you know you are doing that are good and right. I can say that since 2009, since I have been a member of parliament, this is certainly one of those occasions.

I can only say that because of John and Sue Sandeman and the work that they did in ensuring that members of parliament, both federal and state, were hearing the message and they just did not stop until we got it. John and Sue, thank you very much for everything that you have done that has led us to this place today. This morning I met with John and Sue with the Leader of the Opposition. The leader asked the Sandemans how he thought they would feel once this bill was passed tonight. I have to paraphrase here because I do not remember the exact words, but I think John said, 'I don't know; I will have to wait and see.' Well, John, there is not too much longer to wait now. It will not be long now and all that work that you and Sue have done will finally be realised.

I will not talk for too much longer. I think that everybody here expressed their views and we collectively agree that this is the right thing to do and that these laws should be passed. I would say, though, that some members raised queries as to why this legislation was not introduced back in 2014. I would refer those members to the contribution of the member for Hinchinbrook, who articulated why that was so given the Carmody inquiry and the fact that the QLRC had to scrutinise whether mandatory reporting for the early childhood education and care sector should be implemented here in Queensland.

I would also like to say that it has been heartening that we have been able to go through this process, after consideration in detail, with agreement from both the LNP opposition and the government. What members might not know is that the amendments that were proposed by both were very similar. In order to make sure that this went through smoothly, the LNP agreed to accept some of the government's amendments to move forward. I can assure John and Sue that both sides were in agreement on the amendments in all areas, and we fully expect that everything will go through smoothly during the consideration in detail stage.

The spirit of this legislation has always been to bring the early childhood education and care sector into the state's mandatory reporting regime because it is the right thing to do for our most young and most vulnerable zero- to five-year-olds. I have already foreshadowed that I will be moving amendments during the consideration in detail stage. These amendments that I will move are in direct response to the feedback from the consultation undertaken by the parliamentary committee, some targeted consultation by the Department of Education and Training and conversations I and my colleagues have had with their local service providers.

Through this process, stakeholders expressed a preference for commencement of mandatory reporting in the ECEC sector to be 1 July 2017. We have agreed with them and accept the committee's recommendation to amend the start date. It was also during the committee process that stakeholders in the main expressed that the reporting obligation should be linked to roles, not qualifications. While my original bill looked at introducing a reporting regime based on the qualifications of staff in the ECEC sector, I have listened to a broad range of views of the submitters and so the amendments that I am proposing will shift the focus from one of qualification to cover individuals with particular roles in the ECEC sector. It was something that was discussed, as the member for Nudgee said, at great length but the committee was unable to come to an agreement as to how that should look.

The introduction of this new group of mandatory reporters will ensure those people working in the early childhood education and care sector feel protected and compelled to come forward and report suspicions of harm to the authorities. I thank members again for their contributions tonight because it really is an issue that crosses the political divide. I know I can support members in the passing of this bill. I would like to end by again placing on record my sincere respect and thanks to John and Sue Sandeman, who have never given up on making this law a reality. I commend the bill to the House.