




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 16 February 2017

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.18 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition on this do-nothing Labor government. This is a Labor government that, when it comes to protecting vulnerable Queenslanders, is all talk and no action, all show and no go. After more than two years, what do we have from this do-nothing Labor government? We have seen 179 reviews, and not a lot done. We have ministers ducking and shirking responsibilities under the review mantra. While thousands of kids languish in abusive homes, this government reviews. A child dies and Labor reviews. Kids get locked in dark rooms as behaviour management and Labor reviews. Maternity services go into meltdown and we get a review. Thousands of people with a disability continue to miss out on support, and the minister announces a review for a plan.

Labor does not just review; it keeps everything secret. They sack staff with no justification for systemic failures. They promise drug testing of parents with no solution when druggie parents return positive results. We have a review into the foster care and blue card system with no end date, and a review that does not make the system better in the meantime.

We have Labor mate Linda Appelt—the architect of the Child Safety fail that led to a commission of inquiry—being brought back to review staffing. This is the same director-general who saw more than a thousand staff exit the department of communities during Labor's watch through voluntary redundancies in the dying days of the Bligh Labor government. Where are the results of this staffing review? They are nowhere to be seen.

We heard the Minister for Health promise a review of Health's handling of a child death last year. There was no public release; it was swept under the carpet and across to the Family and Child Commission. There was no public release at all. We have a Queensland Family and Child Commission review into Mason Lee, a review into a child's death—another review pushed back and delayed. Does this government even realise that under section 9(2) of the act it clearly says—

... it is not a function of the commission to investigate the circumstances of a particular child, young person or family or to advocate on their behalf.

Now we have a commission delaying reviews on the basis of legal matters—a commission that actually has no power to investigate individual cases in the first place.

Our child safety system has been waiting two years for a review of the Child Protection Act. Not content to review once, they have delayed the review to do it all again. This time it is an issues paper, so we will have no child safety reforms any time soon. We know the government sent a domestic violence public disclosure scheme for further review. Amidst all her reviews, the Minister for Child Safety bumbled and fumbled, forgetting all about child safety until a child died and she had to answer for it at estimates; shutting out key child safety stakeholders; closing the door on those she should include and inviting them back in when her failures were made public; failing to protect our most vulnerable children;

overseeing hundreds, if not thousands, of cases of reported harm; taking off to music festivals while cases sit idle and kids wait for help; failing to resource her front-line staff so they can respond to child abuse; waiting for the LNP to raise her failures before she would act; leaving a failing placement system in disarray; failing to ensure case plans are there for vulnerable children; jeopardising significant reforms; creating a culture of fear and toxicity in her own department; assuring parliament no child is languishing and then overseeing another child death; and saying she is not happy with declining performance data under her watch but letting it get even worse.

Meanwhile, the Minister for Disability Services is once again reviewing another plan. Under Labor we now have a review for a plan. In June we were promised an overhaul of disability support in schools in response to a review. It was due in October but that was delayed until January and now it is February and still there is no solution. That review was only triggered by media headlines of children being locked in darkened rooms at schools to manage behaviour. On top of this we have seen reviews into maternity services at the Gold Coast and we have had a review into the ambos' pay that is a closed shop for union members only.

Amidst the smokescreen of reviews one thing is clear: this is a government with no idea and no clue. We have minister after minister who put reviews ahead of acting to protect vulnerable Queenslanders. When it comes to child safety, we have a minister who hides behind reviews to cover up her own failings. In the words of 'The Boss' she was born to run. It is not good enough for a minister to get up in front of a television camera and sigh while announcing more reviews into dead kids and it is not good enough to delay and hide the findings of internal reviews. It is not good enough to make statements to release findings and then not release them. Under Labor—

(Time expired)