




Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

Record of Proceedings, 17 October 2019

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (3.56 pm): I rise to speak to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's report No. 42, *Oversight of the Queensland Family and Child Commission*. The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has oversight of the commission. This includes but is not limited to monitoring and reviewing the performance of its functions, examining the QFCC's annual report tabled in the Legislative Assembly and commenting, if appropriate, on any aspect of the report. The Queensland Family and Child Commission's annual report for 2017-18 was tabled in the House on 28 September 2018.

The commissioner, the principal commissioner and the director attended the public meeting of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee on 25 February 2019. During that public meeting we discussed with the commissioner a number of the bodies of work that the commission is currently doing. In relation to child protection reforms, the commissioner reported that nine of the 10 QFCC-led recommendations from the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry have been delivered and the remaining recommendation is on track for delivery.

Further, the QFCC had assisted in the implementation of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse by providing advice to the lead agencies. They were also involved in providing submissions to Senate inquiries, the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board as well as this parliament in relation to relevant bills. During the public meeting, we also discussed in depth some of the systems reviews that the commission is currently undertaking. Of interest to the House will be the blue card and foster care systems.

I note that at the public meeting the commission mentioned the systems review of individual agencies' findings following the death of a child. They specifically noted the work that they are doing in assisting the Minister for Education with her water safety round table, stating that the prevention of deaths is key to their work. In relation to the water safety round table, I note that when it comes to deaths of children with autism spectrum disorders aged 14 years and under, drownings subsequent to wandering accounted for 90 per cent. I note the comments that suicide and transport related deaths continue to be the leading causes of external deaths for children.

I note that both the member for Toohey and the member for Southern Downs commented on the work in the report on the Growing up in Queensland initiative. I would urge all members, even if it is not within their portfolio, to have a look at that report. It is an amazing body of work. In the public hearing the commissioner advised us that in Queensland there are 1.2 million children in the zero to 18 age range.

The Growing up in Queensland initiative was a massive undertaking by that organisation. They engaged through surveys and face to face with 7,000 children of all ages throughout Queensland. For those members who are wondering how that engagement works, for children of a younger age that

engagement often occurred through drawings because obviously their ability to provide other information was somewhat limited. The report that has been provided as a result of that work is absolutely amazing.

Other engagement activities included the development of the youth participation strategy and plan. I note the commission has established the Youth Advisory Council. Obviously there is ongoing direct engagement through visits to schools and communities. The commission advocates for the safety and wellbeing of children. They are doing an amazing amount of work in areas that are not only rewarding but also, in many instances, quite confronting. I congratulate the commission on the work they are doing to protect our children and advocate for them.