




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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ADJOURNMENT

Mason Jett Lee

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (7.04 pm): There is nothing more evil than killing a child. As legislators, we have to do everything in our power to protect our kids and ensure appalling yet avoidable cases such as the death of Mason Jett Lee never occur again. Sadly, we have all seen and read the details of little Mason's tragic death. What happened to Mason Jett Lee was an absolute tragedy. As a mother, it breaks my heart to think about what Mason suffered at the end of his short sad life. The public deserve answers to this case—answers this government have refused to disclose for three years, hiding behind legal excuses.

The Palaszczuk Labor government must come clean and release investigation reports into the child safety department and Queensland Health's handling of Mason prior to his death. For almost three years this Labor government has been looking Queenslanders in the eye and promising to release the final reports detailing the full picture of what went so horribly wrong. For almost three years all we have had is secrets, false statements and inaction. Queenslanders deserve answers, and we deserve to know how the system failed Mason Jett Lee to ensure no other child faces the same fate.

This is not about placing blame on front-line staff and hardworking child safety officers—as Labor ministers for child safety have a tendency to do. We welcome news today about a coronial inquest, but it should not be used to prevent these reports being released.

As soon as the LNP discovered this issue we exposed it and demanded something be done about it. This is not about just one tragic death; this is about fixing the system so more deaths do not occur. The Palaszczuk Labor government must release the Mason Jett Lee reports immediately so Queenslanders can see failings within our child protection system which will ultimately make it stronger. Anything less is just more cover-up and secrecy that has marred a broken system.

We need to ensure that we have the right laws and procedures in place to ensure this never happens again. We need to fix the broken child safety system to ensure that vulnerable kids in this state are protected. Under Labor, we have seen a record number of carers walking away from the child safety system. Under Labor, reported abuse is not being investigated within the required time frames. Under Labor, abuse is continuing under the protection of the department. Despite all the money being thrown at the system, we still see abused children at further risk of harm.

Queenslanders deserve better than a sneaky, do-nothing Labor government that cannot be trusted to protect our most vulnerable children. Mason, his aunt and Act for Mason deserve better than cover-ups and secrecy. His legacy should be about ensuring that the systems that failed him are changed so that it never, ever happens again.