



Speech By  
**Stephen Bennett**


**MEMBER FOR BURNETT**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Child Protection**

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.55 pm): After travelling the state and meeting many stakeholders, it is clear and distressing to see our system to protect our kids is in crisis. The sheer lack of action by Labor over the past four years is astonishing. The lives of Queensland children are at risk while urgently needed reforms to the child safety system are delayed year after year. Over a year ago, the Premier refused to release the Child Death Case Review Panel's report on Mason Jett Lee's death. The excuses to keep the report secret are running out. We know that the report, if it is ever revealed, will no doubt be the latest in a long line of failures of this government to protect our most vulnerable.

The latest statistics on child safety are disturbing. Children living away from home skyrocketed to nearly 10,000 by the end of 2018, and that is increasing. In just one quarter, there was an increase of 123 ATSI children living away from home, which was an increase of three per cent. There was also an increase of 24 non-ATSI children for the same quarter.

Children subject to protective orders had jumped to 10,265 by the end of 2018. This was 315 more than just six months earlier and nearly 1,000 more than in 2014-15. The number of notifications—all concerns received that suggest a child is in need of protection—jumped to 25,000 by the end of 2018. That was 1,300 more than just six months earlier and nearly 2,700 more than 2014-15. Only 44 per cent of investigations were completed in the 60-day time period. This means that child safety officers are clearly overburdened.

The rapidly escalating number of deaths are an indictment of the overworked child safety department under the watch of the Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk. In May this year, the Queensland Audit Office released a report stating that the child safety department had not effectively implemented all of the recommendations the Queensland Audit Office made in their 2014-15 *Managing child safety information* report. The failure to reform child safety data is continuing to put children's information at risk, putting children themselves at risk, and continues to put unnecessary pressure on child safety staff. Queensland needs action now before another life is lost.

Domestic violence continues to plague Queensland's communities under the reckless inaction of this government. In the 12 months to May, there were 28,323 breaches of domestic violence prevention orders. That was almost 30,000 times that victims of domestic violence were put at risk after already trusting the government to protect them. Rather than helping these victims of domestic and family violence, this Labor government supports public servant perpetrators by giving them 10 days of domestic violence leave.

It is clear that Queensland's youth are being impacted by domestic violence and they are missing out as well. Sadly, there have been 281,000 attempts to contact the Kids Helpline, with there being only a 50 per cent success rate. That is 52 per cent of those kids who are not getting action. I also call on the government to take up the federal government's offer of funding GPS trackers and to stop ignoring this important issue.