




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2020

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Child Protection, LNP Policy

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.12 pm): The child safety system that was meant to look after Mason Jett Lee has failed too many times, so yesterday we said, and we say again today, that enough is enough. The LNP will overhaul the broken child safety system from top to bottom. The LNP's child protection force will include a 24-hour rapid response team and a new squad of police investigators to clear the many backlogs.

The LNP will introduce compulsory drug testing with no second chances. On a second positive test, the child will be considered for removal. Labor has not implemented what they promised. The Child Safety practice manual focuses on consent from parents. We say it should be about the kids. Our plan is for compulsory drug testing with no second chances. We make no apologies for this hardline approach. Our kids must come first. Under the LNP overhaul, parents on intervention with parental agreements will need to enter into drug rehabilitation services on their first positive test of certain illicit substances.

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr BENNETT: I take the interjections from the other side. If you keep failing, stop doing the same things over and over again. That is why the LNP has put up this policy. Hopefully, the government will take it on board. This is a genuine offer for bipartisanship.

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr BENNETT: They should stop interjecting and work with us to make sure that the kids in this great state are given the services they deserve. We should not apologise for our tough stance. Kids should be protected at all costs. Leaving vulnerable children in dangerous homes where they are abused can be a death sentence. The system will be transparent and more accountable.

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr BENNETT: I am happy to deal with the interjections from across the chamber. We are talking about kids dying under their watch and they keep putting up this nonsense. The LNP put on 86 new frontline services in Child Safety, so they must stop peddling this nonsense. We are arguing about what is happening with kids today. This is why the Labor Party is out of control. It has lost control of the child safety system. We have to make it a 24/7 service. The Labor Party wants a nine-to-five service, but we cannot allow that. Our child protection force will be a real winner for that reason. We have to make sure that we look at long-term care models and increased carer numbers.

We must look at the adoption issues put forward by the Carmody review many years ago. Adoption for poor kids like Mason Jett Lee needs to be considered. If we had done things differently, maybe there would have been different outcomes. We will increase the use of adoption, with priority for kids aged under three years, through permanency order targets and KPIs under a new triage model. We will extend payments to foster carers until their children are aged 21. That is something that those

opposite who keep interjecting failed to do. We will make sure that the officers of the child safety department get the respect, the training and the services they need. Clearly, some experience a cycle of disadvantage from childhood through to adulthood and that needs to be addressed. It is vitally important that, moving forward, we look after the children in this great state.