




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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CHILD PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (12.33 pm): I rise to speak on the Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill was originally referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee in the 56th Parliament before it was transferred to the Community Support and Services Committee. I acknowledge the committee chair, Corrine McMillan MP, the member for Mansfield; the member for Burnett; the member for Maiwar; the member for Scenic Rim; and the member for Nicklin. I also acknowledge the committee secretariat.

On 2 June 2020, Deputy State Coroner Bentley of the Coroners Court of Queensland delivered her findings following the inquest into the death of 22-month-old Mason Jett Lee. The Queensland government accepted all six recommendations in the Deputy State Coroner's report. The bill responds to the coroner's recommendation regarding potentially amending the Adoption Act so that children could be expected to be permanently placed through out-of-home adoption within 24 months of entering the department's care. The bill does not amend the Adoption Act but instead proposes amendments to the Child Protection Act. While the previous reforms to the Child Protection Act 1999 have had positive results, it is acknowledged that more needs to be done to improve the permanency outcomes and stability of children in care.

I briefly want to touch on my experience working as a child support worker for the department of child safety in Cairns. I pay my respects and acknowledge and thank all of our hardworking child safety workers in the department who work extremely hard to make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable children. They need to be recognised in this conversation because it is a hard job. They are in a position where they in some instances are a parent. Standing here today and looking at the child protection bill I think permanency in this space is what is needed. It is not about who we should blame and it is not about the gaps in the system; it is more about working collaboratively to look at ways that we can better improve the system for the benefit of the children to come.

As a parent, my values are around providing stability for my children. As a mother I work hard to make sure that my children get the care that they deserve. We need to work in the best interests of all vulnerable children. I wish more for those vulnerable children in care who do not have the right support in place at home because all children deserve the best. As a parent you want to do the best that you can. This bill will make a world of difference in creating permanency for children who, through no fault of their own, have entered into situations where they do not have stability in their lives. As far as I am concerned, children have the right to be safe in their home, to have a roof over their head and to have food on the table at all meal times. They deserve to go to school every day and make friends and learn through positive relationships. This is what is missing. This is what this bill will provide. It takes all of us sitting in this chamber today to acknowledge the difference it will make to those vulnerable children.

I want to touch on the meriba omasker kaziw kazipa bill. As a Torres Strait Islander, it is important that there is a cultural aspect to providing support to vulnerable children. I acknowledge the minister's support in making sure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids are dealt with in a culturally appropriate manner. As a Torres Strait Islander my culture is important to me. My connection to my

home is important to me. My connection to my family and extended family is what makes me the person that I am today. It is important that the cultural rights of Torres Strait Islander or First Nations children going through the system are protected in this bill.

This bill will make a difference. Kids deserve the best. We all need to do what we can to protect the interests of children in Queensland. Children deserve permanency, stability and a happy and stable home. I think this bill will deliver that. I commend this bill to the House.