




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGEЕ

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Foster Carers, Recruitment

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.38 am): As we all know, Queenslanders have big hearts, but there are none with bigger hearts than Queensland's foster carers. We have been encouraging people to sign up and become foster carers in our latest recruitment campaign. Queensland is always looking for foster and kinship carers who can help make a difference to a child's life and potentially transform their own.

Our foster carer recruitment campaigns are about getting Queenslanders from all walks of life to consider providing a safe, stable home for children in need by sharing real foster carer stories. We are looking for carers to help with short-term care, long-term care, and the care of young children and teenagers, including siblings. The children we are seeking carers for are unable to live safely at home and need a safe place to call home where they can get comfort, support and sanctuary. The recruitment campaign features real foster carer stories promoted on TV, digital platforms and social media, and you can also find these online. Each video story presents a unique perspective of the foster carer experience of couples, singles and Queenslanders with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds stepping up and helping children in need.

I would like to make special mention of Toowoomba based foster carers Karen and Ron, who shared their journey with ABC journalist Belinda Sanders yesterday. Thank you, Karen and Ron, for the work that you do supporting children. I thank journalist Belinda Sanders for the opportunity to go on radio yesterday and put out the call to that region. I urge people to look at these and other amazing foster carer stories and get a feel for what the role entails and what a difference it can make to the lives of these vulnerable children.

The number of children in care in Queensland is continuing to rise and has increased to 10,900 since last year. Our cohort of foster and kinship carer families is just over 5,700, and with demand rising we need more carers. Extra time at home during COVID-19 has given many of us the chance to reflect on what matters most, and there are few things more important than a child who needs your help. For those who have never been foster carers before, my department supplies training and support through specialist agencies and a fortnightly allowance to help meet the needs of those children they open their homes to. To learn more about becoming a foster carer I encourage Queenslanders to visit our website at www.Queensland.gov.au.fostercare or call Queensland Foster and Kinship Care and open their homes to these children.