




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Family Matters Report

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.06 am): All children and young people deserve a childhood free from violence, abuse and neglect. The Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting parents and carers build stronger families and keeping children safe from harm. We are committed to: ensuring that all children and young people grow up safe and thriving, cared for in family and connected to community and culture; that they are supported and empowered; and all that children, regardless of race or ethnicity, have the same opportunities and life outcomes.

Last week *The family matters report 2022* was released. The report looked into what governments are doing to reduce the over-representation of Australia's First Nations children. The annual report, released by SNAICC, shows that Queensland is making genuine progress. Queensland is the only jurisdiction in Australia with positive ratings across all four Family Matters building blocks. We are the first to enshrine all five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in legislation. Queensland is leading the nation in allocating government funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations to deliver family support services.

In 2022-23 the government is investing \$43.4 million to deliver free culturally safe practical support by its 34 Family Wellbeing Services. Family Wellbeing Services are helping mums like 24-year-old Sandy—not her real name, of course—who has four young children. Sandy says the support she received from the Family Wellbeing Service was an incredible help. Staff helped her get her children into day care and a homework club. They helped with budgeting and connecting her to mental health services. They also assisted her with drafting a safety plan to protect her from her partner's abusive behaviour. Family Wellbeing Services received almost 5,000 referrals in the year to 30 September.

The latest report shows that Queensland is making positive inroads towards implementing delegated authority. This change will enable the powers and functions of the chief executive officer of my department to be delegated to the chief executive officer of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity. This is about creating systemic change, enabling greater self-determination and a fundamental shift in how child protection, family support and other services work with, and for, Queensland's First Nations families.

Children are being connected to family, kin and culture, and there are growing numbers of reunifications. To date, 54 First Nations children have delegated authority arrangements in place, and I look forward to this number growing. I commend Darcy Cavanagh, CEO of REFOCUS, and Jason Field, CEO of Central Queensland Indigenous Development, for implementing this new way of working.

It is unacceptable that First Nations children do not have the same wellbeing outcomes as non-Indigenous children, and it is unacceptable that First Nations children are disproportionately represented in the child protection system. We have a long journey, but we are resolute in our

commitment to implementing the Our Way strategy in partnership with Family Matters Queensland and other organisations to ensure First Nations children grow up safe and cared for in family, in the community and in culture.