




Speech By
Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

Record of Proceedings, 14 March 2023

WORKING WITH CHILDREN (INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (6.02 pm): There was a time when I was not attuned to my level of privilege in this world. I was unconscious of the advantage my life circumstances afforded me—advantage that I am now very conscious others do not have. This privilege is something that I make an effort to keep front of mind when it comes to matters concerning our state's First Nations people. This is relevant and important to me, because my privilege has afforded me many opportunities including being a parent of a daughter with arguably more privilege than I was born into. When it comes to our First Nations people, we have entirely stripped away their privilege—along with much more—generation after generation.

I am uncomfortable with the premise of this bill that suggests that a privileged child like mine in my community is afforded all of the protections under a system while a First Nations child in their community should not be, that they should be provided with fewer protections. I am deeply uncomfortable with that proposition. All children, regardless of where they live, deserve the protection of being safe. It is entirely our job to provide a system that has those inherent protections and enforces them.

In 2020 I spoke to this lesser standard in this House during the debate of the predecessor bill from the member for Traeger. In 2017 I was a member of the committee that travelled to the communities of Yarrabah, Hope Vale and Doomadgee. There we heard directly from the communities about these proposed reforms. There is a value proposition here that is really difficult for me to reconcile. There is a risk or potential risk that is being weighed against access, for employment or for kinship. I cannot and do not support the prospect that the access for adults who would otherwise be unable to meet the safety protections for obtaining a blue card should be able to in remote Indigenous communities, because it will come at the cost of safety of kids in those communities.

I do, however, wholeheartedly agree that we need to do better as a government in our Indigenous communities to address this system. That includes navigation assistance, overcompliance, self-determination and reform as set forward in the committee's recommendations. I commend the committee for the work it has done in providing a comprehensive and considered report that has identified a number of safe and sensible recommendations through its work. Further, I am pleased to see the Attorney-General adopt the report's recommendations. I also recognise the advocacy and hard work of the member for Traeger for continuing to pursue this agenda. I look forward to seeing the agreed report recommendations make improvements as they get implemented. While I do not support this bill, I do support the committee report and its comprehensive recommendations and commend them to the House.