




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Child Safety

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.18 pm): We hear a lot about performance in this House. Here are some sobering facts of performance by the state Labor government and the new Miles Labor government. The latest data, released in September last year, shows 1,807 children are now in residential care. Of those, 315 are under the age of 10 years—a tripling of the numbers since 2019. It is not just the LNP saying that this government has the wrong priorities, it is not just the LNP saying that this is not acceptable, I quote Tom Allsop from PeakCare who also outlined that Queensland provides 40 per cent of Australia's residential care placements, despite having only 21 per cent of the nation's children in care.

This government should hang its head in shame. Now we see the third minister for child safety in one year. Former minister Crawford outlined a child safety review that sought to solve some of the issues and provide a road map. The minister called for a focus on how children under the age of 12, First Nations children and disabled children are handled in the state's residential care system. The road map that was released was disappointing, because it did not address any of the issues for children under the age of 12. This government had an opportunity to make a difference by working with the sector and listening to those with firsthand experience on the ground—those who are concerned about the behaviour that they are witnessing by children in the system, those who have suffered assault and those children who are in harm's way from the system itself.

The residential care system was not designed for how it has been utilised. I look forward to releasing my diary in the coming months. It will show all of the stakeholders I meet with across this state. It is reported to me that there are now babies in the residential care system. This government has failed, but the LNP has the right priorities after the Leader of the Opposition and I met with over 60 representatives from the sector. They are: an emphasis on personal responsibility; insistence on attending school; and insistence on extracurricular activity. This will give these kids an opportunity for pride and respect, an opportunity for employment and training for our younger youth and a focus on transition to foster care.

I have met with so many of the foster care services across this state. Some of the most incredible people have chosen to walk away from the broken system that this government has created—the system that has been a funnel into youth justice. I have heard many ministers opposite deny this fact. I look forward to exploring this further in the coming months because the LNP has the right priorities.

(Time expired)