




Speech By
Hon. Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 20 May 2025

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Commission of Inquiry into the Child Safety System

 **Hon. AJ CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.44 am): On Sunday the Crisafulli government announced a commission of inquiry into the child safety system. In the six months since being appointed the minister I have uncovered critical systemic failures in the system. That is why we must take this extraordinary step. As the Premier outlined, anyone who reads the 2024 census survey of over 3,000 children in the out-of-home care system cannot in good conscience sit idly by and do nothing. That is why we have chosen to act. A more than billion dollar industry has been created where for-profit organisations are profiting on the back of vulnerable children.

We know that children who live in residential care have significantly higher needs. The reliance on individual placement support, which was intended as short-term bridging accommodation in response to growing demand, became more of a choice than the stable outsourced service delivery or, most importantly, foster care, kinship care and foster-based care. We have seen an increase in individual placement support from a 2014-15 budget where the spend was \$82 million to this year where it is a cost of \$766 million. That is an average of \$300,000 per child. What we have heard from those children is self-harming, attempts on life, sexual assault, exploitation and neglect. The trauma created by the former government and multiple ministers who were negligent in their responsibilities and their accountability to oversee the system is why we must, for the sake of these children and a future generation of children entering the care system, uncover the systemic failings.

The commission of inquiry will focus on key elements, including reforming the residential care system—not a road map to nowhere; repairing the broken system, including the effectiveness of my department, the resourcing allocation to child safety officers and the frontline service; safer children, both those with dual-care orders and the correlation between the residential care system, the child safety system and the youth justice system; safer communities by evaluating the effectiveness of the department as the corporate parent in line with community expectations—and I look forward to any recommendations the commission has in legislative reform of both the Adoption Act and the Child Safety Act; and delivery failures, around policy as well as ministerial accountability, of the past decade. The stark findings of the census have highlighted that we need to do this because it is our most vulnerable children who are at the heart of this inquiry. They deserve better and a Crisafulli government will ensure that reform is carried out as the commission recommends as part of its interim report and findings.