



Speech By
Hon. Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2025

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

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) (11.06 am): The Crisafulli government made a commitment to the people of Queensland through the Safer Children, Safer Communities plan. What I have uncovered since becoming the child safety minister is nothing short of a diabolical mess. When in opposition we asked questions about children who were self-placing, and as the minister I took steps to conduct the first-ever Queensland audit into children who were self-placing outside of the child safety system.

We had five failed ministers under the former Labor government, and not one of them ever conducted an audit of children who were self-placing to understand why, to understand the risks or to even ascertain if those children were in fact safe. The census found that, of the 772 children who were self-placing: 81 were subject to a youth justice order; 51 were on bail; 144 have been subject to another youth justice involvement or interaction; 325 have a diagnosed disability or a mental health disorder; 269 have a suspected disability or mental health disorder; 371 were missing or absent because they did not like their placement or preferred living elsewhere; 55 did not feel safe in their placement; and 57 had a conflict with another person within the placement. During the census, 586 children were missing or absent and had a history of frequently being missing or absent, and only 44 per cent of them were engaged with school. The findings were damning, with many sleeping rough. Nearly 50 per cent were known to be staying with the family, parents or siblings they had been removed from due to safety. Those opposite knew that self-placing had been occurring. In fact, five former ministers oversaw that regime. It is not good enough. It is not good enough to not ascertain where our most vulnerable children are.

We have taken action. The Crisafulli government will embed child safety officers at three trial sites alongside youth justice officers and police officers. The pilot will trial in Cairns, Caboolture and Logan, and child safety officers will be working after hours to conduct risk assessments on children in care, analyse child protection information on the ground, assist in returning children to their placement or to another safe placement, and act as a conduit to Child Safety to improve continuity of care and casework. We will do this in an attempt to strengthen information sharing between Child Safety and Queensland police. We are also establishing a rapid information exchange with police to support their work on the ground if they encounter children.

There are complex issues and we are fully aware of that, but the systemic failures within the child safety system are why the government has called a commission of inquiry into the failures of the last decade since Carmody. We will do all we can to protect vulnerable children and to ensure safer children deliver safer communities.