




Speech By
Charis Mullen
MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

 **Ms MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (3.25 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the report *Oversight of the Queensland Child and Family Commission* of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee. I wish to acknowledge and thank the QFCC for their diligent work in promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and their work to improve the child protection system. I believe that is something that we can all agree on. I note the work undertaken in the 2023-24 financial year including: the completion of 14 oversight reviews in respect of statutory child protection systems; the 20 formal recommendations made to government; and the 32 formal submissions that the QFCC made to state, federal and international reviews and inquiries.

The committee report noted that in 2023-24, there was increasing transparency about the performance of Queensland's youth justice and child protection systems. I am aware that data in 2023-24 was actively released every three months. Every three months data on the child protection system was released. I have seen—and I just checked right now on the child safety website—that the last available data for child safety ended on 31 March 2025, so we are months behind on the release of data. I wonder about transparency when we have a system that has now been switched on. It means that we are now not getting reliable data as a result of the bungled Unify system that the LNP government has introduced. It is very concerning if we, and all stakeholders, do not have access to that data—

Mr HUNT: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. There seems to be a pattern to the contributions from Labor members. As chair of the committee, I can assure you we were examining the report of 2023-24 and we reported on that. The Labor members seem to be speaking about contemporary issues and not on the report that was produced by the committee and an examination of that annual report.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Thank you member for Nicklin. Member for Jordan, I was having a side conversation with the next deputy speaker coming into the chair. Please confine your contribution to the 2023-24 report and the importance of those matter.

Ms MULLEN: I was speaking about data in 2023-24 and I was speaking about the fact that data was released every three months under the previous government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stick to the report and we will be right. We will start the clock.

Ms MULLEN: That is what I was doing, thank you, Deputy Speaker. There were some specific aspects of the QFCC's work that I would like to specifically focus on, including the work that I was able to do with the QFCC in the time that I was the child safety minister in Queensland. One of these was the QFCC's report, a thematic analysis of provisionally approved kinship carers who received a subsequent blue card negative notice. The QFCC examined cases where child safety had determined that a kinship carer did not pose safety risks to a child as parts of provisional approval, but the carer could not continue caring for the child because they were not approved for a blue card. That report found that the blue card screening was not designed for accessing kinship carers, and that its processes actually created barriers to people becoming kinship carers.

The report recommended removing the requirement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship carers to hold a blue card while retaining the child safety assessment and approval processes and removing the need for provisional approval. The former Labor government supported the QFCC report recommendations in principle and we moved to remove the requirement for all kinship carers to hold a blue card. Those recommendations by the QFCC were specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship carers, recognising the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. However, the QFCC's recommendations also presented an opportunity to take a more nuanced risk assessment approach in screening processes for all kinship carers, at the same time recognising that in removing the blue card requirement we do not make children in kinship care less safe.

In 2023-24 the child safety department had been tasked to work with stakeholders to develop a new framework for screening kinship carers to ensure culturally safe and appropriate safeguards are in place. In response to committee questions about changes to these requirements, the QFCC advised the committee that it anticipates that up to 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children could be moved from residential care to safe placements within their families as a result of these changes, whilst also noting these changes are not yet in force as a commencement date for the relevant legislation has not been set. It has been over a year since the provision in the legislation was passed by the Queensland parliament. The LNP in government has been in power for almost 12 months and yet we still see no framework or progress. The LNP seem to have a lot to say about the broken residential care system but are right now preventing 200 children, according to the QFCC, having the opportunity to be moved out of residential care and into safe placements with kin. I think that is really important and the government should get on with progressing that framework so that we can have those children out of residential care and with kin. I also give a big shout-out to the First Nations and child rights advocacy team whose funding was sadly not continued.