



Speech By  
**Charis Mullen**

**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 February 2026

**MOTION**

**Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence**

 **Ms MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (5.41 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Mansfield. The words we say in this chamber matter. They matter because they are on the record forever, so I would like to share some words uttered in this chamber. There is this—

Child Safety cannot prevent a child coming to harm before they are under Child Safety's care. Once a young person is known to Child Safety, they have every opportunity to make a difference and they fall under the minister's responsibility as that child's guardian.

And this—

This minister has every excuse in the book, but there needs to be a recognition and accountability for the mistakes and for reforms that have not been carried out.

And this—

The minister needs to step up and be accountable because this government is not keeping vulnerable Queensland children safe.

Every one of those words is true and every one of those words was uttered by the now child safety minister in this very chamber. Does she still believe those words? What we have seen since she has been elevated to the role of child safety minister is a clear failure to take responsibility for vulnerable children, a clear failure to accept responsibility and accountability for her mistakes and more excuses over her actions.

I am not going to pretend that child safety minister is an easy role. There were days when it absolutely broke me, reading and hearing about some of the ways that children in our state are being terribly mistreated by the people who should love them the most. There were days when it felt almost overwhelming, but then I would think about our frontline child safety officers, who are confronted with these situations each and every day. That motivates you. It motivates you to work harder to find solutions and to engage deeply with stakeholders, with frontline staff, with foster and kinship carers, and with young people in your care. I never pretended that I would solve every problem in child safety because I understood the complexities.

The member for Whitsunday smugly and arrogantly believed she could walk into this very complex department and know everything. Hasn't that come back to her? Child safety officers have reached out to me. They have told me how unsupported they feel at this time, how senior managers are leaving in droves and how they have been thrown under the bus by this minister and this LNP government. They come up to me at mobile offices to tell me that.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Nanango, I gave you fair warning that if I heard you again you would be warned. You are warned.

**Ms MULLEN:** The department is in shambles. We have a Unify IT system that was turned on too early in order to save money and a minister who claims that she knew nothing about the system failures until September and that her director-general knew nothing, even though it is clear that as early as June the director-general was alerted to clear failings in the system. This is a minister who claims frontline staff did not raise concerns with her, which begs the question: why didn't she ask them? We have a minister who gave Unify a glowing review in early August during the estimates process through an answer to a question on notice that the minister and her staff signed off on. I guarantee the minister would have had written and oral estimates briefings, yet we are expected to believe that issues with Unify were not raised at all.

This beleaguered minister is now working overtime to try to find something she can pin on anyone—the former government or former and current departmental staff. She thought she had a smoking gun by making a song and dance about letters to stakeholders in June 2024 from the former director-general, who advised that June 2024 would be the last datasets available under the old ICMS system. So it must be Labor's fault that we cannot get current data except that, since June 2024, we have seen published data for September 2024, December 2024 and March 2025. It is clear that data was still being produced and published, but suddenly it became unavailable from April 2025, when the minister finally and fully turned on the Unify system. What did the Minister for Youth Justice know—sitting there mute—because that system was turned on in her time as well? The more this minister tries to point fingers, the more she digs a hole for herself.

What we have seen is a former shadow minister who talked a big game. She was going to fix child safety because, as she so often liked to remind us, she is a mother and she is the only one who cares. We have seen very little of that care from the minister who, despite her department being in complete meltdown, said, 'I'm tired and I need a holiday.' I leave you with these words from said minister—

Leadership is about hard conversations. Leadership is about empathy. Leadership is about caring about every Queenslanders—those who are vulnerable, not just those who are out there to make the government look good.