



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.41 pm): I rise to speak on the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee's oversight of the Queensland Family and Children Commission report. The QFCC is a vital part of the child safety portfolio. So much of what they do goes a long way towards building a stronger child protection service for Queensland as well as promoting the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people. As the shadow minister for child safety, I have had the opportunity to meet with Principal Commissioner Luke Twyford and discuss the significant work of the QFCC. I would like to thank the whole team at QFCC for the hard work they do.

During the public hearing the committee heard of the approximately 5,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care and the work of the First Nations and Child Rights Advocacy Team. This team is incredibly important—even more so when you consider that the over-representation of First Nations children within the child safety system was not included in the terms of reference of the commission of inquiry. Despite this oversight, it has been pleasing to see the inquiry's commissioner demonstrate its clear intention to address this over-representation throughout the hearings to date.

In March the committee heard that the QFCC submitted a 2025-26 budget request to the LNP Crisafulli government for continued funding of the First Nations and Child Rights Advocacy Team. QFCC commissioner Natalie Lewis was right in saying that the work her team is doing requires both significant attention and urgent action. There should be no scenario where they are concerned about being funded to continue their critical work, particularly when it comes to young people with First Nations backgrounds. Yet, when I looked into the budget papers one could not find a single line item of dedicated funding for this team to continue this important work.

Almost 50 per cent of children in out-of-home care are First Nations children. First Nations children should be centred in every aspect of their lives, including the policies affecting them—nothing for them, without them. The QFCC is meant to influence systemic change for these children, yet shamefully—but maybe not surprisingly—the Crisafulli LNP government has chosen to limit their ability to do just that through their decision not to continue this targeted funding.

I turn to the Child Death Review Board. I would like to also acknowledge the work of the Child Death Review Board hosted by the QFCC. Their work in reviewing the deaths of children is not easy. It takes an emotional and mental toll. However, this work is important—in fact, some of the most important work we do as government—and their findings help prevent further tragic losses that may have been prevented or avoided. Their annual report noted that 56 per cent of the reviewed cases in 2023-24 involved domestic violence. It notes that suicide is the leading cause of death in children between the ages of 10 and 17. Let me repeat that: it notes that suicide is the leading cause of death in children between the ages of 10 and 17. Facts like this must—must—spur action in every portfolio they relate to, including my own shadow portfolio of child safety and prevention of domestic and family violence.

The review board is also undertaking the review into system responses to child sexual abuse, the blue card review. Every person in this chamber, regardless of their political background, wants to see an effective and robust blue card system—as do all Queenslanders—and we look forward to the final report due to be published in December. I expect that report to be published with transparency and urgency. Children are our future, and we must ensure that all those involved in policies and programs aimed at benefiting children are functioning at their peak with the adequate funding they require.