




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (3.36 pm): I rise to speak to Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee report No. 16 of the 58th Parliament, titled *Oversight of the Queensland Child and Family Commission*. The Queensland Family and Child Commission, the QFCC, plays a critical role in protecting the rights, safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children. Its work ensures that government systems are accountable, that the voices of children and families are heard and that transparency drives reform. The report outlines that the QFCC has delivered 14 oversight reviews and made 20 recommendations to government. These reviews addressed issues ranging from the treatment of young people in watch houses to the impact of parental drug use, to the challenges facing children leaving detention. Importantly, the commission has continued to shine a light on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in statutory systems, an issue that must remain at the centre of all reform.

The commission's work is not just about pointing out problems; it is about providing solutions. Through the Child Death Review Board it recorded 422 deaths in 2023-24 and used that data to drive prevention strategies, from drowning and suicide awareness to sudden infant death syndrome research. Each of these lives lost represents a tragedy, and the commission's work reminds us that data must be turned into action.

The committee's oversight report makes it clear that the QFCC is working to deliver on its mandate: advocating for vulnerable children in our community, strengthening partnerships with government and non-government bodies and engaging directly with over 4,600 Queenslanders last year alone. The QFCC's engagement with young people and families in communities across Queensland and regional and remote Queensland is ensuring that the voices of those most affected are not lost in bureaucracy.

I would like to raise the issue of the commission's data transparency. In 2024 the QFCC launched the Principle Focus dashboard to monitor the over-representation of First Nations children in the child protection system. It created the Data Explorer, a digital platform capturing wellbeing data from over 8,000 young Queenslanders. These initiatives put real-time, reliable information in the hands of policymakers, service providers and communities, yet this progress is now at risk.

As we have heard and talked about often in this space, Unify, as mentioned in the QFCC report on pages 103, 145 and 204, is an issue. The LNP government's decision to go live on the Unify program has disrupted the very data systems that the QFCC relies on. Case records are missing, data feeds are broken and frontline workers are left without the information they need to keep our vulnerable children safe. The commission itself has warned us that poor quality data undermines accountability and erodes public confidence.

Let us examine the facts. The QFCC conducted major reviews on children absent from care and 'crossover' kids, that is, young people engaged with broken youth justice and child protection systems. A recurring theme was the barriers to information sharing that undermine coordinated service

responses. In the report the commission warned that poor quality data erodes accountability and identified data access as a strategic risk. Sadly, the rollout of Unify has confirmed this, with missing case records and broken data feeds. Fixing Unify is not just an IT issue; it is a child safety issue and public confidence depends on it.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. Again, I come to the fact that the reporting period is 2023-24. Some of the content that the member for Lytton seems to be covering now is straying into current matters as opposed to the specifics around that reporting period. I have given some latitude but I raise that with you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your consideration.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): I do consider your point of order. However, reports are fairly broad. I think the member is drawing on an extension of what the report related to.

Ms PEASE: In their annual report, the QFCC has made clear how important data is. That report is a public document. I remind everyone that it was tabled on 13 September 2024 and the committee report was tabled in mid-2025. The information tabled in that document has been on the public record for a period and is able to be read and acted upon.

It is beholden on decision-makers of the day to ensure that new systems will work and, in this instance, deliver what is expected and required of the system before going live. Having worked in IT, I know that many checks and balances are taken before systems go live. In fact, I worked on a government contract where we were getting ready to go live, but because it was not going to meet the expectations they decided not to go ahead with that system. Queenslanders expect more than empty assurances. Queenslanders expect their ministers—

(Time expired)