



Speech By
Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.11 pm): The purpose of the Queensland Family and Child Commission, the QFCC, is to promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and improve the child protection system. This is set out in the act and in the committee report, which expands on that in that the responsibilities of the QFCC include oversight of the child protection system; the promotion and advocacy of children, particularly those in the child protection or youth justice system; and, importantly, reviewing, analysing and evaluating systemic policies and practices relevant to the child protection system.

It is of paramount importance that Queenslanders have confidence that the systems that are being used to protect the children who are in the youth justice system or the children who are in care are robust, are working and are going to deliver the outcomes these children need. That is why it is so concerning to see that there have been so many problems with the rollout of the Unify system since it was switched on. I note that throughout the 2023-24 annual report the progressive rollout of Unify is mentioned multiple times. I take note of the debate that has occurred—

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr McCALLUM: I take the interjection from the minister, and I will get to that in a moment. With regard to the rollout of Unify and the debate of this report to date and the various Speaker's rulings, a Deputy Speaker at the time made a ruling in relation to a point of order, saying—

I find there is no point of order as long as the member can relate what she is talking about now back to the report, and there is a mention of the progressive rollout of Unify in the report.

I also note the comments of both the child safety minister and the youth justice minister in this House earlier today in relation to Unify. During the time this report covers, those ministers were referring to the rollout of Unify. The question now becomes: when it comes to the failed Unify system that has been rolled out in Queensland, why are Queenslanders not being informed of where up to 5,000 child harm reports are? There is a backlog. There were questions that were put—

Dr ROWAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In relation to the member for Bundamba there has been a bit of latitude, but I think he is well and truly now straying into areas outside what is contained within the report and the reporting period and on to other matters. I refer to the rulings that have been made in relation to that.

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, is the ruling that you made just a few moments ago in relation to the commentary from the Minister for Police, who took the opportunity to bring a contrast into the present time, and I would submit to you that that is exactly what the member for Bundamba is doing. He is basing that contrast on the ruling that you made just moments ago in respect of the Minister for Police's comments and I think it is of value to the House that you apply those rulings in a consistent way.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Thank you, Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Going to your previous ruling, the minister was actually responding to an interjection and, therefore, you ruled in that context.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Theodore.

Mr McCALLUM: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order in response to that point of order, if I may: I am simply responding to the debate that has already occurred.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Bundaberg. I will again—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I apologise, member for Bundamba. There is a clear difference between you and the member for Bundaberg. Member for Bundamba, as my neighbour down near Ipswich whom I see often, I should not have made that mistake. Coming back to the issue at hand, you were going very well in referencing the report and just strayed as the Leader of the House jumped to his feet on to topics that are more relevant to today. Please continue to highlight the importance of the things that have come from that report and we will be fine. Thank you.

Mr McCALLUM: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. The report identifies key highlights and achievements of the QFCC in the annual report, including the completion of 14 oversight reviews in respect of statutory child protection systems and other systemic issues impacting children and families. Can members imagine what might have been found during this annual report had a flawed Unify system been turned on by a government that should not have been relying on bad advice or making bad decisions to turn on the flawed Unify system? It is absolutely derelict of the government to turn on a child protection system that is knowingly flawed.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, how does that relate to this report? You are now making criticism of turning something on that is not referred to in that report. I am giving you latitude, member for Bundaberg.

Mr McCALLUM: Bundamba.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba.

Mr McCALLUM: 'Data' is mentioned over 250 times in the annual report. Page 16 of the annual report states that it used data to improve the sector's understanding of risk factors and to support the development of new policies and practices to reduce harm to children and young people. When it comes to these oversight systems, the Queensland public needs absolute confidence in them. When we see public servants being sacked, as sacrificial lambs to protect ministers, that undermines integrity and it undermines public trust in the systems that are supposed to protect our most vulnerable.