



Speech By
Hon. Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) (5.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'That this House' be omitted and the following paragraphs inserted:

1. condemns the members for Waterford, Bulimba, Jordan and Nudgee and the former member for Barron River for their failures in their ministerial duties to protect vulnerable Queensland children;
2. notes the former government's 10 years of failure in dealing with victims of domestic and family violence.'

It is truly astounding that those opposite would come into this place and play political games with the protection of vulnerable children. Have they no shame? Are they so quick to forget how the child safety system in Queensland reached crisis in the first place? I will give the member for Mansfield a clue: the answer lies with those on the benches around her.

Those opposite have the gall to come into this place and cast aspersions against the Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence with their track record. How dare they! Queenslanders will not soon forget how those opposite treated the child safety portfolio when they were in government. Unfortunately for the Labor Party, cheap political stunts on the floor of parliament do not change the facts. It was under Labor that we saw a child safety minister who could not even be bothered to acknowledge the one-year anniversary of the death of Mason Jett Lee at their own press conference. It was under Labor that we saw a minister who was more interested in attending Splendour in the Grass—

Ms Fentiman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! You know what is coming, do you not, member for Waterford? You are warned.

Ms BATES: It was under Labor that we saw the minister attend Splendour in the Grass on the day the front page of the *Courier-Mail* revealed that the department and the minister knew about at least five children's deaths under suspicious circumstances. It was under a Labor government that a minister admitted that her department washed data before releasing it to the public. It was a department rife with a culture of secrecy and cover-up to shield incompetent Labor ministers. These were shocking failures—system failures—that led to the deaths of children, including a baby at Yeppoon—

Ms Pease interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, you are now warned.

Ms BATES:—and Maddilyn-Rose Stokes, known to the Department of Child Safety. And do not ever forget Tiahleigh Palmer and Dexter Wilton, because I will not. It was a system that saw child safety officers burdened by unsustainable caseloads and high staff turnover, particularly in our regions, a system that—horrifically—saw the deaths of children, including Darcey and Chloe Conley, which could potentially have been prevented if child safety officers had the appropriate time and resources.

The member for Waterford's time as child safety minister alone saw at least 12 children allegedly die in care under suspicious circumstances, children like Curtis Powell, Tiahleigh Palmer and Dexter Wilton. That is the legacy of those opposite. That is their track record: a system in crisis, lurching from one disaster to another while they left our most vulnerable at risk, not to mention the fact that those opposite cut funding for 91 existing frontline child safety staff in their 2024-25 budget.

It was the LNP that saved those jobs and we will continue to work to fix 10 years of failures in this space. Who can forget the way those opposite treated the portfolio of the prevention of domestic and family violence? Members in this House know full well that I am a survivor of domestic violence and it is a cause that I care deeply about. It was the Queensland Labor government that sat at the helm while a domestic violence crisis enveloped this state.

I will remind the House of a couple of names. Under the watch of those opposite, on the Gold Coast we saw the tragic death of Tara Brown, who was bludgeoned to death; in my own electorate Teresa Bradford was stabbed by her husband; Larissa Beilby was bashed to death; Shelsea Schilling was suffocated; Melinda Homer was murdered; Karina Lock was gunned down; Fabiana Palhares was bludgeoned to death; Kym Cobby was strangled to death; Mary Bedito was killed; and Kelly Wilkinson was burnt to death. That is their record and that is their legacy: systems in crisis and chaos and the most awful, vile incidents occurring under the watch of the Queensland Labor government.

Unlike those opposite, who bring this sort of unhelpful nonsense into this place, we spend our time trying to improve the child safety system. Who can forget the largest ever petition that came into this parliament for child safety? Thirty thousand Queenslanders called for policy change after the death of Mason Jett Lee. That was the sort of constructive activity that we did in opposition. Instead, they come into this House with their cheap stunts and their shameless grab for a news headline. Unlike those opposite, on this side of the House we are working tirelessly to fix this mess.