



Speech By
Russell Field

MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2025

JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr FIELD** (Capalaba—LNP) (3.46 pm): I rise today to speak on the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee's oversight report on the Queensland Family and Child Commission. As part of the oversight process the committee reviewed the Queensland Family and Child Commission—Annual Report 2023-24, the Child Death Review Board—Annual Report 2023-24 and held a public hearing with QFCC commissioners on 13 March 2025.

The QFCC is responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and improving Queensland's child protection system. The Child Death Review Board, which reviews the deaths of children connected to the child protection system, is hosted by the QFCC for administrative purposes.

The QFCC reported a number of key achievements in its annual report that were of note to the committee. Of note was that the QFCC was featured in 2,385 media reports, which represented an increase of 293 per cent from the previous year. The QFCC also completed 14 oversight reviews regarding statutory child protection systems and other systemic issues. Furthermore, the commission published 10 reports and insight papers on a variety of topics, including young people absenteeism from care placements, and how Queensland is upholding the rights of children.

The QFCC is also responsible for maintaining the Queensland Child Death Register. This register records the deaths of all children and young people in Queensland. Preliminary data from the QFCC indicates there was a decrease in the number of child deaths in 2023-24, with 422 deaths being recorded in contrast to 448 in 2022-23. Of note from the annual report is that over the last three years under Labor, and despite an increase in expenditure on family services, the per child spend in Queensland remains far behind New South Wales and Victoria. In February 2025 the Child Death Review Board tabled its annual report for 2023-24. During this time period, the Child Death Review Board reviewed 70 cases, which was more than it received during the year. Despite this, as of 30 June 2024 there were still 65 cases awaiting a review by the board. Of the cases examined by the CDRB, 56 per cent involved domestic and family violence. In Queensland the leading cause of death for children aged 10 to 17 is suicide, which represents six of the deaths reviewed by the CDRB.

On 13 March the committee held a public hearing with the Queensland Family and Child Commission commissioners. During the hearing, the Principal Commissioner emphasised the value provided by the QFCC's reviews, as well as the importance of the Child Death Register and the work of the CDRB. The QFCC highlighted that significant changes are anticipated following the implementation of the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024. According to the QFCC, the act has expanded the scope of its responsibilities, increased its budget from \$12 million to \$23 million and grown the full-time-equivalent staff from 50 to 80.

When questioned on progress regarding the protection of the mental health of children in Queensland, the Queensland Family and Child Commission advised that it anticipates several government initiatives and new announcements that would make positive differences. Specifically, the commission mentioned the Crisafulli government's 12-month Staying on Track program as having the potential to change the situation of children leaving detention for the better.

In summary, the Queensland Family and Child Commission plays an important role in keeping children safe. Its work in maintaining the Child Death Register and hosting the CDRB is undeniably important. I commend the QFCC for its important work.