



Speech By **Sean Dillon**

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

 **Mr DILLON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.47 pm): I take this opportunity to speak to the committee's report into the 2023-24 Queensland Family and Child Commission's annual report. At the outset, I thank the committee, led by the committee chair and member for Nicklin, for their work. I welcome the continued opportunity to unpack the failings of the previous government in this space. I agree with the opening sentiments of the member for Maiwar about the broad work the commission undertakes, which is often in areas that people do not understand or are not aware of, right across the child safety spectrum.

I commence my contribution by looking deeply into the 'existing youth detention' references made in the commission's report. They found that 'transition plans and rehabilitation programs are not as effective as they could be' and that there are 'negative community views about young people', making recommendations that inevitably became this government's policy platform. There was also a very clear comment made—

In February 2023, the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) raised concerns with us regarding 13 young people who had been detained in a watch house for a period of 25 to 32 days.

That is more than three weeks and more than four weeks. The report went on to say that those concerns 'came on the back of a slew of evidence' so was irrefutable.

As we have heard in earlier contributions, that number has been substantially reduced. Whilst any on that list is too many, it is in a substantially better place than we discovered then. This report also discussed in detail the crossover cohort. The QFFC undertook a statistical study into the crossover between the youth justice and child protection systems to provide data from different perspectives. The fast facts of that study showed—and I will comment at length on the study's findings—

A significant proportion of young people living in Queensland youth detention centres are currently subject to a child protection order

- As at 30 June 2023, 20.7% of young people living in Queensland youth detention centres (51 out of 246) were subject to both a supervised youth justice order and a child protection order.

The report also says—

In 2023—

this is, once again, the period of time that this study refers to—

First Nations children were almost three times more likely than non-First Nations children to be on both child protection and youth justice orders.

Probably one of the most alarming statistics to be extracted from this study is—

A significant proportion of young people who have been identified as serious repeat offenders ... are currently subject to a child protection order

- As at 30 June 2023, of the 452 Queensland young people classified as SROs—
serious repeat offenders—

133 (29.4%)—
almost 30 per cent—
had an active child protection order.

More than half of young people who had been in youth justice supervision during 2020-21 had also had an interaction with the child protection system in the last five years

I guess this study was part of the reason for the change that was undertaken in the Queensland parliament 12 months ago. In direct response to the findings and outcomes in this report, the Crisafulli LNP government is quite grateful for the opportunity to discuss reforms around blue cards. The Crisafulli government is getting on with the job of keeping our children safe by reviewing and strengthening the blue card system.

We provided access to free kindy. In our first year we announced the free kindy program, giving eligible children 15 hours per week of free kindy for up to 40 weeks per year. It took Labor a number of years to pass legislation around child-safe organisations. The Crisafulli government is bringing forward the Reportable Conduct Scheme, strengthening protections for children sooner.

In my last few seconds, I think it is important to point out the work that has been undertaken by the child safety minister in commissioning the inquiry into child safety in Queensland. Whilst that body of work is about to be undertaken, the work in this report only touches the surface of what we will see come out of that commission of inquiry.