



Speech By
Hon. Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Children, Out-of-Home Care

 **Hon. AJ CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.07 am): Today I rise to update the House on the Crisafulli government's reforms. We are well underway in undertaking reform of the Child Safety out-of-home-care system with a sharp focus on residential care following its growth as a billion dollar industry as a result of Labor's decade of decline. The over-reliance on residential care became the norm under the former government, with thousands of Queensland's most vulnerable children calling those places home. It is one of the significant issues that drove the Crisafulli government to call for a commission of inquiry into the broken child safety system, which has received over 960 submissions.

It took a decade for this system to grow into what it is today and it is going to take time to reform, but we are committed to reform and to those children. It will take a whole-of-sector and community approach to turn it around. The Crisafulli government will update the sector next week in a forum that I am hosting that will include peak bodies, along with the Queensland Family and Child Commission and a raft of providers and stakeholders who have a vested interest in getting the best outcome for our most vulnerable children.

Our government is well progressed with reforms in the out-of-home care system. We are reforming the residential care system to ensure young people with complex needs and disabilities are living in environments that not only are therapeutic in nature but also maximise disability support that will underpin opportunities for them to succeed. We have already transitioned a number of residential care providers who provide placements for hundreds of Queensland kids from the expensive individual placement service model to an outsourced service delivery model which we expect to save millions of taxpayers' dollars in the coming years whilst also providing better opportunities for our children. We are on track to deliver the Crisafulli government's SecureCare facility, which is about protecting young people and the community after those opposite failed to, after the Carmody inquiry.

Our professional foster care pilot will be operational in the coming months, taking children out of residential care and placing them in loving family homes. We are returning respect to foster and kinship carers and enhancing support and valuing them, because it is our belief that family-based care is the best care for our children.

I want to take the opportunity to thank our current foster and kinship care families we have across this state for opening their homes and their hearts to vulnerable kids. From the member for Glass House, I want to give a shout-out to Mr Phillip and Mrs Diane Wilson who have been foster carers for 44 years, which is an amazing achievement and service to our community.

Mr Powell: Over 200 children.

Ms CAMM: Over 200 children—I take that interjection. They have left a lasting imprint on those children and their lives.

Last month I hosted Queensland's first adoption round table with key stakeholders, including people with lived experience, advocacy groups from across the state and service providers. At this forum, I heard about the challenges and opportunities for adoption, permanency and stability for children in our state. I want to thank those who came to the round table for sharing their experiences and their honest and frank feedback based upon lived experience; on adoption practices past and present; and also on new models that exist right across the globe. The Crisafulli government will take on board these insights as we progress with further reform of the Child Protection Act and the Adoption Act with an aim to ensure children who are currently placed in long-term care arrangements in the system have an opportunity for stability in a loving home.

We have made it clear that more needs to be done to protect children who come into the care of the state as we, for many of them, are their only parent. The Crisafulli government is on track to deliver this reform and will ensure the best possible outcomes for our most vulnerable children, who deserve every opportunity to thrive.