

Speech By

# Hon. Amanda Camm

## MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 3 June 2026

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Child Safety Commission of Inquiry, Report

**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) (2.10 pm): I join with the Premier and the Attorney-General in thanking the Hon. Paul Anastassiou KC, along with his secretariat staff and all of those who contributed to the commission of inquiry. I also place on record my thanks to my department, which also spent countless hours in contributing to the commission's work.

Every Queensland child deserves to grow up safe and supported, and every child deserves a family. If their parents cannot care for them or their home is not safe, they need a child safety system that puts their wellbeing above all else. The former Labor government failed and left a broken system after a decade of decline. They instilled a culture of secrecy and fear within the department and, under five former ministers, failed to provide leadership, and each year it continued to decline. The frontline staff were overworked and under-resourced. Foster and kinship carers were disenfranchised with 80 per cent saying they would not currently recommend this role to a friend or family member. Most importantly, thousands of vulnerable children were left sitting in a system failing them in the most formative and most vulnerable times of their lives.

Queensland has 13,568 children living in out-of-home care, by far the largest number of children in care anywhere in our nation. There are 2,258 children in residential care, including 78 under five years of age and 472 under 10 years of age.

As the minister, as a mother, it keeps me up at night. As Queenslanders, we should all be ashamed of how those opposite failed vulnerable children. Labor's policy failures meant foster and kinship carers were unable to keep pace with demand and, as the number of children requiring protection continued to increase as a result, Labor ministers became more and more reliant on residential care placements that created houses of horror where children experienced sexual abuse, violence, neglect and where providers lined their pockets on the back of this vulnerability.

Children in residential care are some of the most vulnerable young people in our community and many have significant disabilities. There was no effort made by those opposite to increase foster care placements. There was no effort made by those opposite to work collaboratively across portfolios. Carers have told us they felt overlooked, unsupported and burdened by a system that had become increasingly complex.

We on this side of the House recognise the importance of foster and kinship care, of family-based care, and that plays a critical role particularly in giving children stability, connection and a sense of belonging. It is why I have made the policy decision that no children under the age of five are to remain in residential care.

The challenges facing the child safety system did not emerge overnight. They have developed over many years and require serious reform that will take time. Our government has been clear from day one that we are prepared to confront difficult truths and make the decisions necessary to improve outcomes for children and ultimately break the cycles, particularly around youth crime. Through this report, Queenslanders will come to terms with the scale of what was inherited, the significant task that is set before us and our commitment to fix the child safety system to establish clear policy direction, establish legislative reform and provide leadership to the department to embrace reform in the interests of the child always.

Since coming to government, our Safer Children, Safer Communities plan has delivered more for children in care, more for our frontline staff and more for foster and kinship carers in supports—more than those opposite ever tried to do in a decade. We located 800 missing children when those opposite had no idea where they were, and we continue to monitor children self-placing.

We have launched a professional foster care pilot to support children with complex needs and transition more young people into family-based care. We have provided $1,500 for extra-curricular activities for children in foster and kinship care, and that is practical support to ensure children have opportunities to participate in their local community, in sport and in the arts. We are progressing the state's first secure care facility, something those opposite failed to do after the Carmody inquiry. We are rolling out a dual carer model in residential care settings and we are also increasing the front line by 20 per cent. Let us not forget we are also fixing the broken IT Unify system that was developed and designed by the former Labor government.

At the same time, we are working to restore respect for foster and kinship carers when those opposite failed to do so. We recognise the extraordinary contribution they make to children every day. There are thousands of Queenslanders who open their homes, and my message to them today is: we need more of you. We need 1,000 more foster carers in this state, and we will deliver. They will provide safety, stability and hope, and their contribution cannot be overstated. Our government is committed to ensuring that we fix the broken child safety system.