

Speech By

Hon. Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, Child Safety System

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) (9.57 am): This budget is about strengthening the foundations of the fresh start that we promised. We are supporting our state's most vulnerable. We are backing our vulnerable children. We are putting victims first. We are holding perpetrators to account. We are setting a new foundation for the child safety system to fix that broken system that we inherited from those opposite and that was laid bare in the commission of inquiry.

The number of children in residential care was to surge to over 3,000 in the forwards. We saw growth over the period of those opposite of 229 per cent. The annual cost of residential care escalated from $300,000 per child in 2019-20 to approximately $500,000 per child in 2024-25. That record is shameful, and the Crisafulli government is taking action. We understand the magnitude of the broken system that we inherited and the reform that we have to deliver, and we are getting on with the job. We have already set the policy direction that we are removing children under the age of five from residential care. I can update the House that that is going exceptionally well, and I thank the foster carers who are taking those children.

We have already established a cabinet subcommittee as we consider the commission's recommendations. This budget provides $200 million to start the response and reform necessary to fix the broken system. We are building Queensland's first secure-care model and we are on track to deliver our election commitment to grow the number of child safety frontline officers by 20 per cent. Under those opposite, 80 per cent of foster and kinship carers would not recommend the role to a friend. Today I can announce that we are expanding the professional foster care pilot. On this side of the House we are laser focused on the wellbeing of children and delivering the reforms needed to deliver better outcomes for our most vulnerable.

This budget also continues our commitment to putting victims first and holding perpetrators to account in the fight against domestic and family violence, which rose under those opposite. We are continuing to roll out hope hubs, expanding the North Queensland 24/7 crisis DV hub response, supporting electronic monitoring for high-risk perpetrators and investing in frontline domestic and family violence workers across Queensland, with those jobs secured through to 2030. We are also investing in social infrastructure. This budget fully funds neighbourhood centre capital works that were unable to be delivered by those opposite. It provides certainty for food security organisations, financial counselling and emergency relief services.

For older Queenslanders it was pleasing to see the response from the Council of the Ageing, which said that it looks forward to working constructively with the Queensland government to build on the positive investments in this budget. This budget makes important investments in the systems that

older people rely on. I am very pleased to work with many government members across their communities in delivering U3As, more Seniors Expos and more Seniors Card benefits and working to protect and strengthen the outcomes of the elder abuse inquiry.

While federal Labor delivered a budget of broken promises that threatens the aspirations of everyday Australians and the economic security of those most vulnerable, our budget reflects the priorities of the Crisafulli government in strengthening foundations to deliver safer children, safer families and safer communities.