



QUEENSLAND
**CHILD
PROTECTION
WEEK**

Child Protection – It's Up to Us.

The abuse or death of a child is distressing and a reminder of how vulnerable and dependent children are on those who are meant to care for them – but mostly that we are all responsible for children and young people.

All includes the need for bipartisan support for the ongoing implementation of reforms initiated under the 2013 Carmody report, which provided a 10 year road map for child protection in Queensland. No one government in one timeframe can progress the amount of change and enhancement to a system that has been built up across decades. Community and neighbourhood support, agency and department collaboration, enhanced training and awareness and responsiveness to the whole family...these are just some elements of our current reform.

Accountability and responsibility are not the same as blame. Poor practice does need a response and there is strong support across the community for every effort to improve practice and to address both systems and individual accountability. It can be thankless work and Child protection is particularly susceptible to the blame game. When children are harmed or murdered in our society, we are all adept at pointing fingers and turning on each other.

As a community, if we continue to say that protecting children and young people is solely the responsibility of government departments or agency workers, are we really able to protect them?

We know in reality, the complexity of our society and systems means that so many more factors are at play when a child is abused or the most horrific of incidents occurs and a child dies. We are fortunate enough to live in a country and society that rejects child abuse and neglect and has systems in place to protect and care for children and young people when their parents or carers, for a variety of reasons, either temporarily or permanently are unable to care for their needs and wellbeing.

No one state or country can claim to have found the solution to these very complex issues, often intergenerational, impacting children and families who come to the attention of Child Safety service systems. This government and the next and all those after them will continue to have this vital social issue on their agendas.

I never want to be part of a society that isn't outraged when a child is abused. I most certainly don't want to be part of a society that isn't horrified when a child dies due to horrific and sustained abuse. I also don't want to be part of a society that blames anyone and everyone they can think of who could have, would have, should have done something, somehow, somewhere.

If we genuinely want to ensure that our children and young people are safe and experience wellbeing, we all need to stop looking for someone to blame and look at ourselves, our families, our environments, our communities and the systems surrounding us that we can both access and improve. Our key message during Queensland Child Protection Week and all through the year is that Child Protection is Everyone's Business. It is. No other way of dealing with this issue is realistic.

We are all in this together. We need every Queenslander to care and pay attention to the importance of children and young people in our lives and communities. All children and young people. It is up to me. It is up to you. It is up to us.

Elisabeth Kobierski
Chairperson
Queensland Child Protection Week Committee

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