



Deb FRECKLINGTON MP

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Media Release

The Child Protection Force LNP's plan to overhaul child safety system

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LNP Leader Deb Frecklington has vowed to overhaul the child safety system and protect vulnerable kids from drug-abusive parents if her party wins the next state election.

A stand-alone agency called the Child Protection Force will be established by an LNP Government that will include a 24-hour rapid-response team and a new squad of police investigators to clear the backlogs.

The LNP will also introduce compulsory drug testing with no second chances to combat escalating drug addiction and to hold parents accountable for caring for their children.

Ms Frecklington said the avoidable tragedy of Mason Jett Lee had exposed fundamental failures in the Department of Child Safety and further cases of shocking child neglect showed gaping cracks in the system remained.

"If I were Premier, it will be a priority to keep our kids safe," Ms Frecklington said.

"Too many kids are dying or suffering severe harm under the current system and that has to change.

"I make no apologies for my tough stance. Kids must be protected at all costs.

"The legacy of little Mason Jett Lee must be one of sweeping change to the child safety system that failed him.

"Sadly, Labor's child safety system is still failing to protect vulnerable children and I'm determined to overhaul it from the top down.

"The cycle of tragedies, inquiries, and failures must end.

"It's time to act and that's what an LNP Government will do. Leaving vulnerable children in homes of abuse can be a death sentence.

"The LNP's new Child Protection Force will put safety first and stop vulnerable kids from slipping through the cracks.

"Labor's broken Department of Child Safety must be left in the past to meet the safety needs of Queensland kids now and into the future.

Let's get Queensland working again

“The LNP believes it’s time to stop the cover-ups and end the bad habit of hiding behind privacy provisions.

“The system should be designed to protect vulnerable kids, not senior bureaucrats.

“The LNP’s Child Protection Force would take a hard-line approach to drugs to keep kids safe.

“ICE addiction is rife under the Palaszczuk Labor Government and the prevalence of it in the child safety system is life-threatening.

“The cycle of drug use and child abuse must be broken and parents need to break the cycle of addiction to ensure they can care for their kids.

“The LNP’s Child Protection Force will implement random compulsory drug tests for illicit substances like methamphetamine for people on Intervention with Parental Agreements.

“Under the LNP’s plan, positive tests to certain illicit substances will require participation in a drug rehabilitation service so parents get the support they need to break the addiction.

“A second positive test will lead to children being placed in foster care under a no-second-chances model because the cycle of drug abuse must be broken.”

The LNP’s Child Protection Force

- The Department of Child Safety will be overhauled, renamed the Child Protection Force, and operate as a stand-alone agency.
- The Child Protection Force will adopt a hierarchy and rank structure similar to the Queensland Police Service to ensure proper oversight and accountability.
- A rapid response team will be on standby for after-hours support
- A new team of police investigators will be called in to clear backlogs and overhaul investigation procedures for high-risk cases, with a focus on monitoring kids under 5 years of age.
- Child Protection Force officers will be on hand 24 hours a day under new shift arrangements.
- Officers will be required to work two eight-hour shifts a day, seven days a week

Shadow Minister for Health and Act for Mason patron Ros Bates said the protection of kids would now be a 24 hour operation.

“Vulnerable kids aren’t only in danger from 9 to 5 and so the job of protecting them shouldn’t be 9 to 5 either,” Ms Bates said.

“Child Protection Force officers will be there when they’re needed, around the clock, helping to protect children who can’t protect themselves

“As a survivor of family violence, I know too often children are caught up in the horror of domestic and family violence.

“Overhauling the child safety system will complement the LNP’s plan to end to scourge of domestic violence in Queensland.”

Shadow Minister for Child Safety Stephen Bennett said a key part of the LNP's plan was increased transparency and accountability.

"The LNP will introduce new performance reporting for all regional child safety service centres to increase transparency and accountability for senior executives to ensure vulnerable kids don't fall through the cracks," Mr Bennett said.

"Regional offices will be required to undertake two-year accreditation programs to improve standards and increase local accountability, similar to recent changes in New South Wales.

"Officers in the LNP's Child Safety Force would undergo new training and development with a focus on identifying behaviours that put kids at risk, with increased early intervention to identify the support needed for kids in care."

An LNP Government will extend payments to foster carers for children in care until they are 21 under a new \$4 million two year trial that will bring Queensland in-line with most other states.

"It's about creating a long-term care model, with increased support for carers and more help for families transitioning kids into adulthood to break the cycle," he said.

Mr Bennett said the LNP would also increase the use of adoption through a new triage model with permanency order targets and new KPI's, with a priority for vulnerable children under three years of age.

"The Carmody Inquiry recommended more adoption permanency orders through use of adoption, but that hasn't happened under Labor," Mr Bennett said.

"An LNP Government will recruit more foster carers to work with local service centres and create more emergency care options."

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