

Please quote: /PS03/SocPol

Mr Lawrence Springborg MP
Leader of the Opposition
Parliament House
Alice Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Lawrence

I refer to your petition calling for a Royal Commission into all forms of child abuse in Queensland.

At this point in time it is imperative that all parties put aside political differences and work together to address the problems of child abuse and neglect in our community. I look to you for support of my Government's efforts to put the interests of our most vulnerable children first.

My Government has demonstrated that it is clearly committed to ensuring the safety of Queensland's children. My Government has also demonstrated a willingness to expose itself to outside scrutiny in the area of child protection. To that end, my Government referred matters relating to the abuse of children in foster care to the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) as soon as we became aware of them.

The CMC is a standing Royal Commission with wide powers of inquiry and I encouraged the Commission to use the full force of these powers to investigate the serious matters that were presented to it. As you are aware, the CMC acknowledged that it would be necessary to take into account aspects of the broader child protection system in Queensland and that many of the inquiry's recommendations may have application beyond the foster care system. I have no doubt that the CMC investigations were as thorough as those which would have occurred via a Royal Commission. The findings of the CMC inquiry will be delivered shortly and once received will immediately be made public. As you are aware, I would like to move forward on addressing shortcomings in the child protection system as soon as possible and have asked the CMC to release its report as a matter of urgency so that this work can commence.

I believe that establishing a Royal Commission would only further delay a full response by Government to the CMC's imminent report and to this week's report by Gwenn Murray, the independent auditor. The sooner that steps are taken to repair the child protection system, the sooner children subject to a notification of abuse or neglect and children in foster care can be afforded the level of care and attention that they deserve. As you know, there are also significant costs associated with establishing a Royal Commission. I believe that such money would be better spent on accelerating further reforms to the child protection system.

I trust this information is of assistance to you and would hope to work with you in a bipartisan manner to ensure that all Queensland children have the opportunity to grow-up in a safe and secure environment.

Yours sincerely

PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER AND MINISTER FOR TRADE