




Minister for Communities, Women and Youth
Minister for Child Safety
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

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The Honourable Peter Wellington MP
Speaker of the Legislatively Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

17 October 2016

	Paper No.: 5516T2205	
	Date: 1/12/16	
	Member: Mr Speaker	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tabled	<input type="checkbox"/> Tabled, by leave	
<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated, by leave	<input type="checkbox"/> Remainder incorporated, by leave	
Clerk at the Table: [Signature]		

Dear Mr Speaker,

In a series of statements and questions made in Parliament House on 11 October 2016, the Opposition made a number of incorrect assumptions about child safety performance data to justify claims made in statements to the House and preambles to questions during Question Time.

I welcome scrutiny and transparency about child protection performance, but this public commentary needs to be informed. There is no room for misinformation being used to politicise debate about Queensland's child protection reforms. I believe certain statements made by the Member for Mudgeeraba went beyond politicisation of the subject matter and constitutes contempt under Standing Order 266(2).

On 11 October in House at 11.53 am during a matter of public importance the Member for Mudgeeraba made two statements:

1. "We have 1,124 cases closed without follow-up, without any attention, whilst children waited for Child Safety to come knocking on their door."
2. In making this claim the Member for Mudgeeraba also said cases were "shut down" at my direction; "...we have it confirmed that this minister simply shut down a record number of suspected child abuse cases..."

In both instances I believe the Member for Mudgeeraba deliberately misled the house:

With reference to 1, the member for Mount Ommaney, in Question Time on 11 October 2016, asked a question relating to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services performance data "Table IA.1Q: Notifications requiring investigation, by investigation and assessment outcome, Queensland". Specifically the question related to the information about the number of notifications where the outcome is recorded as "No investigation and assessment outcome".

This data relates to the investigation and assessment outcome. In Queensland all notifications are investigated.

In asking the Question, the Member for Mount Ommaney incorrectly claimed these cases were closed without an investigation taking place.

"Can the minister guarantee the safety of the 1,124 children the subject of potential child abuse reports in the past year whose cases were closed without any investigation?"

I immediately corrected the Member's assertion in my answer.

"The member for Mount Ommaney is incorrect: the 1,124 were recorded with no outcome. In fact, an investigation commenced but what usually happens with these cases is that families move interstate and there is an interstate alert. We work with the police and our interstate counterparts to then locate those families in other states."

The Member for Mudgeeraba was present in the House and heard this correction. However, the Member repeated this claim in her speech given after Question Time and said:

"We have 1,124 cases closed without follow-up, without any attention, whilst children waited for Child Safety to come knocking on their door."

I believe the Member for Mudgeeraba knowingly sought to mislead the house by suggesting no action or follow up was made by Child Safety. I believe the Member is aware of the definitions used in child safety performance tables and she is aware that staff cannot report investigations and assessments having commenced until the child is sighted. For children residing in different states this is problematic, but nevertheless investigation attention and follow up is made to determine a child's whereabouts – or to be blunt staff "knock on doors". I believe her action in this matter constitutes contempt under Standing Order 266(2).

With regard to 2, the *Child Protection Act 1999* does not authorise the Minister to interfere into the statutory authority provided to child safety officers.

The claim that I as Minister "simply shut down a record number of suspected child abuse cases..." is baseless and without merit. I believe the Member for Mudgeeraba knowingly sought to mislead the house and the Member's action constitutes contempt under Standing Order 266(2).

In accordance with Standing Order 268 and 269, I request the matter be referred to the Ethics Committee for investigation.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Shannon Fentiman', written in dark ink.

Shannon Fentiman MP
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