

28-8-97

LAI'D UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE

THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT



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Mr Lingard

Mr Speaker,

I seek leave to make a Ministerial Statement...

- Protecting children and ensuring their safety is one of the focuses of my Department's work.
- With Child Protection Week in early September and Operation Paradox on September 10, the community are encouraged to raise their awareness of children's needs and their safety.
- Child Protection Week is set aside this year with the theme being 'Putting Children First'.
- My Department, working jointly with the community sector, will launch a video titled 'Prevention of Violence in Families'
- The week will also include a debate 'We put children before ourselves', a Child Protection dinner, parent evenings and

shopping centre displays.

- Another important activity running throughout the week in keeping with the theme of 'Putting children first' is information evenings on stress and self esteem, developing a balanced lifestyle for busy parents, and protective behaviours.
- Continuing joint initiatives with the Queensland Police Service, Operation Paradox proceeds again this year offering everyone in the community the opportunity to stamp out sexual crimes against innocent children by phoning-in information.
- Operation Paradox'97 is targeting serial paedophiles throughout Queensland.
- Despite some resistance from some groups, due to the prospect of malicious complaints, the Police Service, the Government, and the Children's Commission are adamant this operation is invaluable in assisting tactical investigations into

organised paedophilia.

- Last year the success of Operation Paradox was apparent with 309 cases of alleged abuse being investigated. The average age of the victims ~~were~~ ^{was} eight years old.
- This Government has ensured tougher penalties for perpetrators of child abuse and sexual offenders against children with changes to the Criminal Code earlier this year.
- ~~Also under review, is the thirty year old Children's Services legislation. This Act is seen as no longer suitable for providing a high standard of service delivery to children and their families.~~
- The ^{new} ~~proposed~~ ^{titled} legislation, the 'Children and Families Bill' will provide a more contemporary approach to the way my Department and the Queensland Police Service operate regarding statutory work involving children and families.

- The legislation will also emphasise the important shared care role of the community and Government in the protection of the children of Queensland.
- In May, Queensland's community awareness was raised by the Child Abuse Community Awareness campaign. This campaign was developed because of the increased number of child abuse notifications to my Department.
- The aim of the campaign was to reach every Queensland parent with messages that parents can, with appropriate support, think about the little things they do.
- All these approaches to child protection are being strengthened by this Government. My Department is promoting early intervention and prevention strategies as well as helping the innocent victims, ^{the} (~~our~~ children), live in a safer environment.