

To whom it may concern,

**RE:** Submission regarding the Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026

If my submission is made public I respectfully request that my identity be protected with my name, email and contact number to be kept confidential.

I am writing as a mother of a 15 month old baby girl and member of the public who has followed recent child protection discussions closely and who felt deeply affected by recent events and the broader debate around protecting vulnerable children.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission regarding the Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026.

### **Summary of recommendations**

I support passage of the Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026 because:

- Child safety should be the paramount consideration in decision-making.
- Protecting children and maintaining culture are not mutually exclusive goals.
- The Bill continues to preserve family, culture, language, community and Country connections.
- Children should not remain exposed to serious harm because decision-makers fear historical comparisons.
- The Bill appropriately balances child safety, family support, accountability and long-term stability.

### **Background and overall position**

I recognise there are individuals and organisations who are deeply concerned these reforms risk creating another Stolen Generation. I understand why those fears exist. The history of Aboriginal child removals caused profound trauma, and those harms should never be minimised or forgotten.

However, I do not believe this Bill recreates that history.

The Stolen Generations involved children being removed because of who they were, because they were Aboriginal, and with the deliberate purpose and effect of separating children from family, culture and identity.

This Bill does **not** propose removing children because of culture or identity. It proposes that where there is a significant risk of harm, a child's safety becomes the paramount concern while still preserving family, cultural and community connections wherever safely possible.

Importantly, the Bill itself retains provisions relating to kinship, family participation, culture, language, community and Country. It does not remove these considerations, it places them within a framework where child safety comes first.

There is a significant difference between removing children because of race and intervening because a child faces serious risk of abuse, neglect or harm.

Equating these situations risks creating a false choice, as though we must choose between protecting children and protecting culture.

We should refuse that false choice.

Protecting children and maintaining connection to culture, family, language and Country are not mutually exclusive goals. Children should be protected from harm while every effort is made to preserve and nurture these important connections throughout the process.

Respecting the lessons of history should not mean allowing children to remain at risk today.

I do not believe children should remain exposed to serious risk, repeated trauma, or even death because decision-makers fear criticism or fear historical comparisons. The lessons of history should guide us toward safer and more culturally informed systems, not create paralysis where children are left in dangerous situations because adults are afraid to act.

Children deserve both: safety and identity. Safety must come first, while cultural connection should be actively protected alongside it wherever possible.

### **Reasons for supporting specific provisions of the Bill**

#### **1. Section 4 – safety, long-term stability and security**

I support the amendment adding "safety, long-term stability and security" to the objects of the Act.

Children need more than good intentions. They need safety, security and stability. Childhood is short and children should not spend years living in uncertainty or instability while adults struggle to resolve complex circumstances around them.

2. **Proposed section 8** – best interests of the child and safety as the first consideration

I strongly support the amendment making the best interests of the child paramount and requiring the first considerations to be ensuring safety and protecting children from harm and exploitation.

This is one of the most important parts of the Bill.

A child's safety should never become secondary to any competing consideration.

I do not interpret this provision as saying culture is unimportant. Culture matters greatly. Family matters. Identity matters. **However, children cannot benefit from cultural connection if they are not first protected from serious harm.**

3. **Proposed section 12A** – family responsibility with intervention where there is significant and likely risk of harm

I support recognising that families have primary responsibility for raising children while also requiring intervention where there is a significant and likely risk of harm.

Families should be supported wherever possible, but there must also be a point where systems act decisively to protect children.

4. **Proposed section 12B** – family placement where safe and in the child's best interests

I support prioritising placement with parents and family members where safe and appropriate.

This demonstrates that the Bill is not about removing children from families unnecessarily. It supports family connection where safe while recognising that safety and best interests must guide decisions.

5. **Proposed section 12C** – maintaining culture, language, community and Country

I support provisions recognising Aboriginal kinship groups, family participation and connection to culture, language and Country.

This directly addresses concerns that culture has been removed from decision-making.

Supporting child safety should not mean cutting children off from identity.

## 6. **Proposed section 12D** – proactive support and reunification efforts

I support requiring proactive efforts to prevent removal where safe and support reunification where appropriate.

Child protection systems should not only intervene after serious harm has already occurred. Families should receive support **early** and be given meaningful opportunities to address issues **before** crises escalate.

## 7. Family Responsibility Agreements and Family Responsibility Orders

I support these measures because they create accountability while also offering support.

Parents should receive practical assistance, clearly understand expectations and be given opportunities to engage.

However, where repeated opportunities are not taken and children's wellbeing continues to suffer, there must be a pathway for stronger intervention.

## 8. Greater transparency around protection order applications

I support requiring evidence of efforts already made before protection orders are sought.

This creates safeguards and ensures removal is not treated lightly while also providing transparency regarding alternatives and support attempted beforehand.

## 9. Greater focus on permanency and long-term stability

I support changes designed to reduce repeated short-term arrangements and provide children with long-term stability.

Children should not spend years drifting through uncertainty. If reunification is realistic it should be pursued, but if it is not, children deserve permanency, security and stability.

Recommendations

I respectfully recommend that:

1. The Assembly pass the Bill.
2. The Assembly retain the provisions making child safety the paramount consideration.

3. The Assembly retain provisions supporting culture, kinship, language and Country.
4. The Assembly retain early intervention and accountability measures including Family Responsibility Agreements and Orders.
5. The Assembly retain provisions promoting long-term stability and permanency for children.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Kind regards,

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