

**JUSTINE DAVIS MLA**  
**INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR JOHNSTON**

*integrity | action | community*

## **Media Statement: A failure of scrutiny is a failure for Territory children**

Thursday 9 July 2026

---

Yesterday, the Legislative Scrutiny Committee tabled its report into the Government's child protection reforms.

The Committee's job was clear: examine the Bill, listen to the evidence and determine whether it would make children safer.

Instead, Government members on the Committee recommended that the Bill pass despite overwhelming evidence, expert advice and the concerns of people with lived experience.

Every witness agreed that the NT's child protection system needs urgent reform. The question was never whether change was necessary - it was whether this Bill would make children safer.

The overwhelming evidence was that it would not.

Instead, witnesses repeatedly identified the real barriers to child safety: workforce shortages, a lack of safe and affordable housing, inadequate therapeutic and family support services, and a system struggling under sustained pressure.

These are the problems that must be addressed if we are serious about keeping children safe. This Bill does not address them.

It is extraordinary that Government members of the Scrutiny Committee recommended passing this Bill after receiving 150 submissions, with more than 120 opposing the legislation in its current form.

Rather than responding to the serious concerns raised by experts, practitioners, Aboriginal organisations, legal services and people with lived experience, the majority report effectively dismissed them.

This is a profound failure of the parliamentary scrutiny process. And it will impact the lives of Territory children for decades to come.

Page 1 of 2



# JUSTINE DAVIS MLA

## INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR JOHNSTON

*integrity | action | community*

---

When governments ask for evidence and then ignore what they are told, they fail not only the people who participated in that process, but the children whose lives this legislation is intended to protect.

Parliamentary committees exist to scrutinise legislation, test it against evidence and improve laws before they are passed. They are not there to simply endorse decisions that have already been made.

Territory children deserve reforms that are informed by the people who work with vulnerable children every day, and by those who have lived through the system themselves.

They deserve a Parliament that listens to evidence, takes scrutiny seriously and passes laws that actually improve their safety and wellbeing.

**Media Contact:** Vivien Clarke 0461 421 112

