

## Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register (Daniel's Law) Bill 2025

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ABN: 80 232 074 742

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**CONVENOR,  
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Lou De Castro Myles

**Email:**  
[REDACTED]  
**Web:** [www.siseap.org](http://www.siseap.org)

**Postal Address:**  
SI Brisbane  
C/- 2012/12 Edward St  
BRISBANE QLD 4000  
Australia

## **INQUIRY INTO THE COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND PUBLIC CHILD SEX OFFENDER REGISTER (DANIEL'S LAW) BILL 2025**

### **A SUBMISSION FROM SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL BRISBANE INC**

**TO: The Committee Secretariat**  
**Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee**  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE QLD 4000  
Email: [jicsc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:jicsc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

**FROM: Soroptimist International Brisbane Inc**  
Email: [REDACTED]  
*Key Contact for this Submission:*  
**Ms Lou De Castro Myles** - Convenor, Program/Advocacy and UN Liaison  
Mobile: [REDACTED] (NFP)

### **INTRODUCTION**

We thank the Justice, Integrity, and Community Safety Committee for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register (Daniel's Law) Bill 2025.

As an organisation dedicated to the rights and safety of women and children, Soroptimist International Brisbane (SIBrisbane) acknowledges the Bill's intent to strengthen community protection and honour the legacy of Daniel Morcombe. As part of Soroptimist International (a global volunteer movement with over 66,000 members across 118 countries), we work to educate, empower, and enable women and girls at all levels—local, national, and international. Our mission aligns closely with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

We support the overall objectives of the Bill, particularly the tiered register model, which is designed to enhance community awareness and child safety. However, we also wish to raise concerns about potential unintended consequences, including the risks of vigilante actions, increased community anxiety, and the lack of comprehensive evidence regarding the long-term effectiveness of such initiatives.

## SUPPORT FOR THE BILL'S OBJECTIVES

The Bill's three-tiered framework provides a more measured approach compared to some overseas models:

- Tier 1: A public listing of missing, non-compliant offenders, which enhances accountability and assists law enforcement.
- Tier 2: Locality searches, allowing communities carefully controlled access to relevant information.
- Tier 3: A parent/guardian disclosure scheme, empowering parents and carers with essential information to safeguard children.

We also welcome the inclusion of important safeguards, such as prohibiting the disclosure of information about juvenile offenders, protected witnesses, or individuals covered by court orders. These protections align with international human rights obligations.

## CONCERNS AND RISKS

Despite these protections, several significant risks require careful consideration:

1. **Limited evidence of effectiveness**

Research in Australia and internationally suggests that public registers **do not reduce reoffending** and may instead create barriers to rehabilitation (Fitzgibbon et al., 2018; Parkinson, 2017).

2. **Risk of vigilante behaviour and stigma**

Even with new offences targeting misuse of information, evidence from the United States and the United Kingdom demonstrates that public disclosure can lead to harassment, violence, and forced relocation of offenders (Kemshall, 2018).

3. **Impact on women and families**

Many registered offenders live with partners or families. Women and children in these households may face **secondary stigma, threats, and housing insecurity** as a result of public exposure (Australian Institute of Criminology [AIC], 2020).

4. **Potential displacement of resources**

Focusing heavily on disclosure may risk diverting **resources** from more effective prevention strategies, including early intervention, therapeutic programs, and education addressing the underlying drivers of sexual violence (Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council, 2020).

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

While supporting the Bill's intent, we urge caution and recommend the incorporation of the following complementary strategies to ensure balanced, evidence-based child protection.

1. **Strengthened prevention and education.**

Broaden school-based protective behaviour programs, integrate digital safety education, and provide comprehensive resources for parents and carers. These have shown greater preventive value than punitive-only models (Queensland Family and Child Commission, 2021).

## 2. **Trauma-informed and culturally safe rehabilitation**

Expand investment in offender rehabilitation that is trauma-informed, gender-responsive, and culturally appropriate, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system (Douglas & Fitzgerald, 2018).

## 3. **Support for families of offenders**

Provide dedicated counselling, housing, and safety supports for families of registered offenders, to reduce unintended harms on women and children.

## 4. **Independent review and oversight**

While the Bill includes a five-year statutory review, we recommend a broader independent assessment based on clear indicators like **recidivism rates, community safety outcomes, and compliance with human rights standards**. We also propose a mid-term review after at least two years to address issues early before they escalate into serious problems and repercussions.

## 5. **Alignment with international best practice**

Draw from models in **Canada and New Zealand**, where disclosure is more controlled, risk management is prioritised, and victim-survivor support is central (Kemshall, 2018; Soroptimist International, 2021).

## 6. **Integration of community-based prevention strategies**

Alongside the register, increase investment in community-driven prevention initiatives, such as mentoring programs, restorative justice approaches, and public awareness campaigns on child protection.

## CONCLUSION

**Soroptimist International Brisbane** recognises the purpose of the Bill and supports the need for effective measures to protect children from sexual violence. We recommend an evidence-based and prudent approach to implementation, ensuring that:

- the register does not inadvertently cause harm to women, children, or families
- resources continue to prioritise prevention, education, and rehabilitation; and
- independent evaluations inform ongoing improvement.

Our organisation remains dedicated to constructive consultation, advocacy, and community education to support the successful realisation of Daniel's Law and to minimise unintended negative outcomes.

Soroptimist International Brisbane Inc



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