

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

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Submission to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee
Re: Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register (Daniel’s Law) Bill
2025
Date: September 9, 2025

Disclaimer

All names and identifying details of young people have been de-identified and modified to protect their privacy and confidentiality. Any references to individuals are fictional or anonymized to ensure their identity remains confidential.

About the Authors

Kathleen Walsh

Kathleen Walsh is the Founder and Director of Craic On Foundation Ltd, a support and referral service dedicated to assisting victim-survivors of child sexual abuse. Through the Foundation, she provides a safe, compassionate, and trusted pathway for individuals to access counselling, legal guidance, advocacy, and community resources. Kathleen is a survivor of child sexual abuse by Catholic priest Neville Joseph Creen, whose crimes include Kathleen as his 22nd criminal conviction. Her lived experience drives her commitment to justice, safeguarding, and survivor-centred advocacy. Kathleen works closely with professionals, agencies, and law enforcement to ensure victim-survivors are heard, respected, and protected, advocating for stronger accountability and meaningful reforms.

Shane Cuthbert

Shane Cuthbert is a former youth offender turned Law and Psychology graduate, advocating for youth justice, human rights, homelessness, mental health, and domestic violence. Shane has lived experience in the youth justice, prison, mental health, and addiction spaces. He has spoken with various State and Federal Parliamentary Committees on victims’ support, decriminalisation of public offences, and youth justice reform. Since March 2024, Shane has worked alongside Cairns businesswoman Perri Conti, supporting at-risk youth through mentorship, food provision, and outreach in Cairns CBD.

Submission

Background

This submission represents a collaboration between Kathleen Walsh and Shane Cuthbert. Together, they bring lived experience and professional insight into youth justice, child safety, and victim support. They highlight the urgent need for systemic reform to better protect vulnerable children and break cycles of abuse and offending.

Lifetime Registration for Child Sex Offenders

We strongly support the implementation of **lifetime registration for all child sex offenders**. The evidence and lived experience demonstrate that these offenders pose ongoing risks to children and communities, and rehabilitation does not guarantee cessation of offending behaviours.

Key points:

- Lifetime registration is critical to ensure ongoing monitoring and community protection.
- Offenders should remain on the register regardless of historic or recent offences.
- The register should include mechanisms to notify communities when offenders relocate, with appropriate safeguards to protect residents' privacy and safety.

Mandatory Minimum Sentencing and no parole.

We recommend **mandatory minimum sentencing for child sex offenders** to prevent their early release into the community where they may reoffend. Strong sentencing laws act as a deterrent and protect children from harm. Preventing reoffending reduces overall crime and the trauma that fuels cycles of offending. If offenders also had to serve their full sentence with no parole and actually got decent sentences it would go a longer way to protecting the community. Daniel Morcombe would not have been saved because of a sex offender register but if his offender had received the sentences he should have received in his previous cases he would not have been out in the community in the first instance.

Blue Card System Reform

The current **Blue Card system in Queensland is inadequate** in preventing offenders from accessing child-related employment and volunteer roles. Numerous perpetrators have slipped through due to systemic weaknesses.

Recommendations:

- Abolish the Blue Card system or substantially overhaul it.
 - Transfer responsibility to organisations to conduct robust criminal history checks and act decisively on allegations.
 - Remove unnecessary barriers preventing survivors and those with lived experience from obtaining Blue Cards, particularly in Indigenous kinship care contexts.
 - Introduce a national consistency in checks and protocols, aligned with Federal Government reforms.
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Protecting Vulnerable Children in Care

High numbers of children in Queensland's care system have experienced or are vulnerable to child sexual abuse. Despite interventions such as Operation Uniform Kalahari, many children still enter the criminal justice system rather than receiving appropriate therapeutic support.

Key recommendations:

- Enhance trauma-informed care and support services tailored to the needs of children in care.
 - Prioritise early intervention to prevent criminalisation of victims.
 - Increase resources for mental health, counselling, education, and mentorship programs.
 - Develop culturally safe programs for First Nations children, reducing their overrepresentation in out-of-home care.
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Community Safety and Public Awareness

While a **public child sex offender register** may aid community safety, careful consideration is needed to balance transparency with the privacy and security of individuals and communities:

- Avoid publishing precise addresses, even suburbs.
 - Consider notification zones or community alerts without revealing exact locations.
 - Engage local communities and victim-survivors in developing communication strategies.
 - Huge risk with vigilantes.
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Conclusion

The cycle of child sexual abuse, trauma, and subsequent criminalisation can only be broken by **strong laws, lifetime monitoring, systemic reform, and trauma-informed community support**. Protecting children must be paramount. This submission urges the Queensland Government to:

- Implement **lifetime registration** for all offenders.
 - Enforce **mandatory minimum sentencing and no parole** for child sex offenders.
 - Overhaul or abolish the **Blue Card system**, holding organisations accountable.
 - Increase therapeutic and culturally appropriate support for children in care.
 - Develop community protection policies that balance safety with privacy.
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Thank you for considering this submission informed by lived experience and professional advocacy.

Kathleen Walsh

Founder & Director

Craic On Foundation Ltd

Shane Cuthbert

Youth Justice Reform Advocate
