

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

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Submitted by: [REDACTED]
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As a parent and concerned community member, I write to express my strong support for Daniel's Law and to advocate for its expansion to provide Queensland families with greater access to information about child sex offenders. Child sexual abuse has profound and lasting impacts on victims, their families, and communities. Research indicates that survivors often experience long-term psychological, emotional, and social consequences. For instance, a study by Levenson and Socia (2015) found that adverse childhood experiences, including sexual abuse, are linked to increased risks of criminal behaviour in adulthood. Furthermore, the Australian Institute of Criminology notes that while public sex offender registries may have a small general deterrent effect on first-time offenders, they do not reduce recidivism rates. However, non-public registries that assist law enforcement have been shown to reduce reoffending by aiding in the monitoring and management of offenders. Public opinion strongly favours increased transparency regarding sex offenders. A national survey conducted by the University of Canberra revealed that a significant majority of Australians support public access to information about convicted child sex offenders. This sentiment underscores the community's desire for greater control over child safety and the protection of vulnerable individuals. Internationally, public sex offender registries have been implemented with varying degrees of success. In the United States, Megan's Law mandates that information about registered sex offenders be made available to the public. While these registries have faced criticism for potential negative consequences, such as vigilantism and stigmatisation of offenders, they have also been credited with increasing community awareness and enabling parents to make informed decisions about their children's safety. Similarly, the United Kingdom operates a Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme, which allows parents and guardians to request information about individuals who have contact with their children. This scheme has been praised for empowering parents to take proactive steps in safeguarding their children while maintaining appropriate safeguards to prevent misuse. To further enhance child safety and empower families, I propose the following amendments to Daniel's Law:

- 1. Broader Search Capabilities:** Expand the search functionality to allow parents to identify offenders in neighbouring areas where children may attend school, participate in extracurricular activities, or visit relatives. This broader scope would provide a more comprehensive understanding of potential risks in the community.
- 2. Detailed Offender Information:** Increase the amount of publicly accessible information about offenders, including offence type, sentence length, and release dates. This transparency would enable families to assess the level of risk associated with individuals in their vicinity and make informed decisions about their children's interactions.
- 3. Simplified Access to Tier 2 and Tier 3 Checks:** Streamline the process for parents and guardians to request background checks on individuals who have unsupervised contact with children. Implementing an online portal with minimal bureaucratic barriers would facilitate quicker and more efficient access to this critical information.
- 4. Real-Time Updates:** Ensure that the registry is regularly updated in real time to reflect changes in offender status, such as relocation, release from custody, or breaches of reporting requirements. Timely updates would ensure that families have access to the most current information available.

Expanding Daniel's Law to include these measures would provide Queensland families with the tools and information necessary to proactively protect their children from potential harm. By enhancing transparency and accessibility, we can foster safer communities and empower parents to make informed decisions about their children's safety. I urge the Queensland Parliament to consider these recommendations and take decisive action to strengthen child protection laws in our state.