



Speech by  
**Mr DENVER  
BEANLAND**

**MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY**

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Hansard 9 December 1999

**CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—LP) (6.28 p.m.): This legislation is about protecting the most vulnerable within our community, the children of Queensland, from paedophiles. It is unfortunate, as we all recognise, that so often rehabilitation in this area simply does not succeed, and that is the reason that this legislation is necessary.

Over the years since the Sturgess report and that time in 1989 when legislation in this regard was first introduced, there has been a greater awareness about paedophilia activity within the community. One of the most significant areas of change that we have seen in recent years has been the establishment of the Queensland Crime Commission. This is one of the references that can be followed up by the Crime Commissioner and a matter on which he can focus and concentrate. It is great to see that we now have a Crime Commission that is doing the job that, unfortunately, many of us believed the Criminal Justice Commission was going to do for us. It is sad that that was not done from the time when it was established in 1989-90 through to 1996-97 when eventually the position of Crime Commissioner was established. As set out in the legislation, investigation of paedophilia is one of the functions to be undertaken by the Crime Commissioner.

This is another reason why this legislation has been brought forward. I believe we will see further legislation brought before the Parliament as the Crime Commissioner undertakes further investigations and looks at overseas trends. The Crime Commissioner might be able to improve the process in this State. Coupled with that, we have the ongoing work of the Queensland Police Service. We must congratulate the Queensland Police Service for the work they have performed in this regard. A tremendous amount of surveillance work is involved in the investigation of paedophilia. The majority of the work involved in apprehending paedophiles consists of surveillance.

We have seen very significant changes following the establishment of the position of Crime Commissioner by the former Government. It is necessary to have a particular focus in legislation such as this. It is interesting to look back at some of the comments which are contained in the Karen Sampford report produced by the Queensland Parliamentary Library. Mr Sturgess spoke about paedophiles in this way—

"... driven by a strong compulsion to seek children; they actually hunt for them; many will be, or will act as, single men and are not tied to one place by the demands of home and a family."

That is one of the reasons why we have this legislation. For a number of years those matters were ignored, and we cannot undo that.

It is important that we now have the Crime Commissioner undertaking specific work in this area in conjunction with the Queensland Police Service. The Crime Commissioner has the same powers as the Criminal Justice Commission. These powers are necessary in order to follow up the craftiness—for want of a better word—of paedophiles and the lengths to which they go in order to carry out their activities.

The shadow Minister outlined some aspects of the legislation with which the Opposition is not very happy. I agree with the comments of the shadow Minister in that regard. Simply making some changes to the Queensland Community Corrections Board will not overcome some of the very

important issues. I believe it would be preferable to retain the Attorney-General—or some other person if the Attorney-General is not available, such as the Police Commissioner—as the responsible officer rather than the Queensland Community Corrections Board.

There is a greater awareness in the community concerning the activity of paedophiles. In the past, these matters have been swept under the carpet. Those concerned are now much more accountable. Many of the old cases are now coming before the courts. The shadow Attorney-General referred to the situation as it was in 1977, and I will not refer to that matter any further.

Whichever model we adopt, I believe we will see further amendments to the legislation coming before the Parliament. We will see further improvements in the way in which the Crime Commissioner and the Queensland Police Service tackle this problem. There will have to be changes in the way that the courts handle these matters. Action will have to be taken in relation to the notifications and the way in which we get the message across to the community. We have to consider whether notices go to parents who live in the vicinity or to school principals. The restrictions on the way in which a school principal can use information will have to be reviewed. It is not enough to simply tell the principal of a school. There will need to be changes in that regard. The other matters have been covered by the shadow Minister.

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