



Speech by

## John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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### CRIMINAL CODE (CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND ABUSE) AMENDMENT BILL

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (12.54 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak to the Criminal Code (Child Pornography and Abuse) Amendment Bill. This is a wonderful move by the Attorney-General and I am happy to see these vile offences receiving legislative recognition in the Criminal Code. I am very pleased to see the strong penalties for the making and distribution of child exploitation material, and I cannot support strongly enough the placing behind bars of these barbaric people who prey on innocent children. Over recent times technology has increased the risk of the exploitation of children. However, it is very good to see that the same technology is being used to fight these criminals. The Australian High Tech Crime Centre, which is run by the Australian Federal Police and their state counterparts, has been successful in recent times, catching five men who were charged with more than 1,000 offences. These were men who had images ranging from naked children to the sick images of babies being sexually assaulted. It is also very pleasing to see that the federal justice minister, the Hon. Chris Ellison, has been working with the state attorneys-general and the state police ministers to put together and continue the Australian National Child Offender Register. There are some very real concerns these days, particularly with the rise in the number of children entering and chatting in chat rooms, and the lack of transparency with that whole process.

I share the concerns of the honourable members for Maryborough and Woodridge as well as other members about our children and their activities in chat rooms. My wife and I have both had to give advice with regard to being careful about identifying themselves when on the net when they are not sure who is on the other end. This shows us that our children are innocent, naive and gullible, and unfortunately there are people out there who will exploit these delightful traits. This is something that we need to be very conscious and aware of.

Children are now subjected to so many unregulated views, opinions and influences on the internet, and this is worrying to me as a member of this parliament but, more importantly, as a parent. To abuse technology in this manner is an absolute disgrace and, while there will always be new frontiers to fight, I am proud to see that the good guys are putting up a good fight in taking on these sexual predators. This legislation brings about a significant change in the protection of children from these predators by moving the focus of the current legislation to the key focus, which is that of protecting children. Where the previous provisions, hidden away in the classification legislation, were more about protecting children from seeing explicit material such as this, they were weak in terms of protecting children from being a part of these horrible movies and pictures. That is to say, by placing such provisions in the classification legislation, we are saying more strongly that we do not want people to see these acts. We do not want them sold or published because we do not want people to get offended, upset or outraged. This is a very valid point and one that needs to remain because these are offences and images that would outrage and disgust any reasonable person.

However, as this legislation rightly contemplates, there needs to be protection for children not just from viewing these acts but from being subject to these acts. While there has always been some

contemplation of this, and while we have always had provisions in place to protect children, the fact that there are now such severe penalties for this. That it is in the Criminal Code is a big step forward, and the Attorney-General should be congratulated on that. Aside from that, I feel the possible defences are appropriate and the bill, in general, achieves its aims. I commend the bill to the House.