



Speech by


## Darren Grimwade

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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### CRIMINAL LAW (TWO STRIKE CHILD SEX OFFENDERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (4.49 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Criminal Law (Two Strike Child Sex Offenders) Amendment Bill 2012. This legislation introduces tough penalties to better deter potential child sex predators in our communities. Our communities deserve to have confidence in a government that will offer adequate sentencing to ensure that those in our community who commit the most heinous crimes are removed from society and offer no further risk to our most vulnerable group in the community, our children. This government makes no apologies for our tough stance in relation to crime. This legislation will deliver on the Newman government's election commitment and subsequent 100-day plan to introduce tough sentencing, including that for child sex offenders.

Under this legislation, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 and the Corrective Services Act 2006 will be amended to provide a new mandatory sentencing regime of life imprisonment, with a 20-year non-parole period, for certain repeat child sex offenders. This legislation will restore community confidence in the criminal justice system. Under the current legislation we have seen many examples of repeat offenders offending over and over and over again and yet being allowed to re-enter local neighbourhoods, posing a risk to our children. In a nutshell, this legislation provides a two-strike policy, where if you are convicted once and reoffend the court must impose a sentence of life imprisonment, which cannot be mitigated or varied.

Whilst I was reviewing the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report No. 2 into the bill, I noted that one of the submissions made from stakeholders was from Bravehearts, an advocacy group that has a vision of making Australia the safest place in the world to raise a child. In its submission, it told the committee—

The reality is that child sex offending is a compulsive, addictive behaviour that damages victims for life. High risk offenders pose a continued danger to our communities as such we believe that a specific, targeted multiple strike legislation is an appropriate and justified response to these habitual/persistent child sex offenders.

As a father of three young children, it horrifies me that my children could be subjected in our neighbourhood to repeat sex offenders who have addictive behaviours that could potentially damage those children for life. When I speak to people on the streets at my community listening posts, they tell me it is time to make our communities safer. They tell me they have had enough of criminals laughing in the face of courts. They tell me it is time for this government to stand up and impose penalties to ensure that those criminals are punished accordingly. When I am out and about in the community, I consistently hear things like, 'You know what, when I was a kid it was safe to ride my bike to the shops to get a loaf of bread.' These days the community does not feel safe to allow our children onto the road. They do not feel safe to allow our children to walk to school.

This legislation moves one step closer to ensuring that the community will understand that this government takes a strong stance on these people and sends a message that it is not acceptable in our

society. Lately, we have seen convicted child sex offenders laughing in the face of the law. Recently, a sex offender who had a tracking device fitted ripped off that device and engaged in inappropriate behaviour in the community. Convicted child sex offenders have joined a charity group that expose them—under different names, I might add—to children in the community. Our communities want this government to send a strong message to any child sex offender. They want us to remove from our communities any risk from these people. This legislation ticks all the boxes in ensuring that we are tough on child sex offenders and ensuring that, where the offender has reoffended, they will never return to our local neighbourhoods.

Those who have followed my activity since being elected and throughout my campaign will understand that I have worked hard to make our local area a safer place to live. We have already introduced additional police officers to the beat and provided our local police district with more resources that are needed to protect our community. Recently I conducted a community survey as part of my communications with the community. To date the majority of those have been returned indicating that crime and criminal punishment are at the top of the agenda of issues that are most important to the constituents in my area. They are almost on a par with the No. 1 issue, the cost of living. The fact that local crime is now rating as high as cost of living is a concern to me. I am proud to have already implemented these initiatives and further sentencing to ensure that our community is kept safe.

This legislation is one more example of how I intend to continue to fight and ensure that our communities are kept safe and that the community can have confidence that those who want to commit crimes and disrupt our local neighbourhoods and, in this case, interfere with our children will have no place in modern society. It is for this reason that I will be supporting the bill tonight. I commend the bill to the House.