




Speech by

Michael Crandon


MEMBER FOR COOMERA

Hansard Tuesday, 10 July 2012

CRIMINAL LAW (TWO STRIKE CHILD SEX OFFENDERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (5.27 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Criminal Law (Two Strike Child Sex Offenders) Amendment Bill 2012. The bill is intended to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to put in place mandatory sentencing of life imprisonment for certain repeat child sex offenders. It is also intended to amend the Corrective Services Act 2006 to prescribe a minimum non-parole period of 20 years to add some definition to that. Next to murder, these are the most heinous crimes. This bill is intended to ensure adequate deterrence for repeat child sex offenders. These people are predators. They do not want to be helped; they want to be predators. They want to go after the young children in our community. It is the repeat offender that we are targeting with this particular bill.

Our children are our most vulnerable and valuable part of society. The suffering and anguish experienced by the children and by their immediate and extended families when something like this happens is immeasurable. The children will carry the pain for the rest of their lives—as will their families for allowing something like this to occur, even though they had absolutely no knowledge.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (7.35 pm), continuing: Our children are the most vulnerable people in the community. The suffering and anguish experienced by the victims of child sex offences never goes away—for them or their families. Let us not forget: this bill is for repeat offences of a serious nature under new section 161D. Section 161D states—

A serious child sex offence is an offence against a provision mentioned in schedule 1A, or an offence that involved counselling or procuring the commission of an offence mentioned in schedule 1A, committed—

- (a) in relation to a child under 16 years of age; and
- (b) in circumstances in which an offender convicted of the offence would be liable to imprisonment for life.

The section headings or descriptions of offence in schedule 1A are 'Unlawful sodomy', 'Owner etc. permitting abuse of children on premises', 'Carnal knowledge with or of a child under 16', 'Taking child for immoral purposes', 'Incest', 'Maintaining a sexual relationship with a child', 'Rape' and 'Sexual assaults'. We are talking about the most serious, heinous crimes we can think of and we are talking about repeat offenders. These offenders will have already spent time in custody in this state—and probably for many, many years—yet they did not learn; we could not convince them. As I said earlier, these people are predators. They do not want to get help. They live for this and, therefore, we have to consider the toughest response available. That is where this bill is taking us.

Those offenders who are caught under the legislation are not caught out by something they did not know about. They knew when they committed these offences in the first place what they were about. These predators planned it, plotted it and trapped young children. They knew all about it; they have been down the road before. They have already done serious time. Society has already given them a chance. This is strike 2. That is what the bill is about: strike 2. 'Well, we told you, but you just didn't heed the warning.' That is what we are saying with this bill. 'If you do that to one of our kids a second time, having already been warned well and truly, we are going to come after you and we are going to lock you away for

the next 20 years as a minimum.' I support this bill because it sends that absolutely clear message to these people.

Clause 10 inserts a new schedule 1A, 'Serious child sex offences', which lists the offences to which the mandatory life imprisonment sentencing regime in new part 9B, 'Repeat serious child sex offences', applies. In relation to 'Unlawful sodomy', the Criminal Code Act contains a description of the offence. In relation to the 'Owner etc. permitting abuse of children on premises', the act contains a description of the offence. The act does not contain just a one-liner; we are talking about a very definite process that has been gone through by these people. In relation to 'Carnal knowledge with or of a child under 16', the act contains a description of the offence. In relation to 'Taking child for immoral purposes', once again the act contains a description of the offence. The same applies in relation to incest, maintaining a sexual relationship with a child, rape and sexual assaults. The act is descriptive; it lets you know exactly what it is all about. Believe you me, offenders' barristers and solicitors would be letting them know what this is all about the first time around. As I said a moment ago, I support this bill because it sends a clear message to repeat offenders. We cannot back away from being very tough on crimes of this nature. I commend the bill to the House.