




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2014

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Serious Child Sex Offenders

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.46 am): This government has taken a stand against serious child sex offenders—the worst of the worst—because we want Queensland to be the safest place in Australia to raise a child. In 2012 we implemented our two-strike legislation, the toughest legislation of its kind, to target recidivist child sexual predators and put them behind bars—laws which were opposed by the Labor Party. The government also created a new offence for grooming a child under 16 years of age and greatly increased maximum penalties for a range of other terrible crimes, including possessing child exploitation material and procurement of a child. We are also currently reviewing Queensland sex offender laws with a view to make them even tougher following the Court of Appeal's rejection of our declaration laws last year that were aimed at the worst of the worst child sex offenders—again, laws opposed by the Labor Party.

I advise the House today that I have instructed the Director of Public Prosecutions to appeal the sentence of Brett Peter Cowan. Last week Cowan was sentenced to life imprisonment with a non-parole period of 20 years for the murder of Daniel Morcombe. I immediately reviewed the sentence and sought advice from the DPP. Upon considering the advice, I have determined to appeal the non-parole period on the grounds that it is manifestly inadequate. I also consider the sentence does not meet community expectations and does not act as an appropriate deterrent. Bruce and Denise Morcombe are much admired in the Queensland community for their tireless advocacy and unwavering resolve. I have spoken with both Bruce and Denise about this appeal.

This government is determined to make Queensland the safest place to raise a child, which is why we introduced our two-strike laws and are conducting a review of all sex offender laws in the state. We will continue to reform Queensland's criminal laws to tip the scales of justice back in the favour of the victim and ensure that the children of Queensland are protected from preying sex offenders.