




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Child Protection

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.58 am): It is the saddest of realities that a very small number of people in society make a conscious choice to prey on our most vulnerable children. It absolutely sickens me to the core when I see reports of children who have been abused. It is even more abhorrent when the perpetrator is someone close to the children—someone who the child should be able to look to for protection and wellbeing.

Later today the police minister will introduce legislation into the parliament to help police protect our kids. The new legislation will give police enhanced powers to intervene in situations before sexual or other serious offences have been committed against a child. It is specifically aimed at disrupting and preventing recidivist offending. For example, it will allow police to demand passwords and access codes from reportable offenders for their electronic devices if there is a reasonable suspicion that an offence has occurred such as accessing child pornography. If someone does not comply with police, they could face five years in jail. Importantly, we will look to protect our kids in the court system.

The new legislation will prohibit self-represented respondents or reportable offenders from being able to cross-examine children who are witnesses. Kids who have been abused should not have to be scared or intimidated by their alleged abuser in court. The police minister will provide further details when he introduces the bill later today, but rest assured that this government—this parliament—has zero tolerance for child abusers. We will do everything that we can to protect our kids.