




Speech By
Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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ADJOURNMENT

Serious Offenders, Change of Name

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.51 pm): Just how many people convicted of or charged with criminal offences, particularly child sex offences, are allowed to change their names each year? Who knows? I have asked that question of the Attorney-General—a very reasonable question—and she has failed to answer. I table her answer, which is a non-answer, providing an explanation of process only.

Tabled paper: Answer to question on notice No. 2252 of 2016 [[168](#)].

The parliament has a right to know but, more importantly, the public and victims have a right to know the answer to that question. Is the process adequate to stop serious offenders, particularly child sexual offenders, from changing their names to slip beneath public scrutiny? That is a mystery that the Attorney-General can shed light on. It is also a mystery as to why she did not answer a reasonable question in the first place—a question put on notice through this parliament. Let us have the truth so that we can ensure that the best protections are in place for victims and the wider community to stop people who have committed terrible crimes from hiding from scrutiny by a name change, particularly when they are released back into the community.

I ask the question because Brett Cowan, the convicted murderer of Sunshine Coast schoolboy Daniel Morcombe, changed his name in Western Australia to something wacky—Shaddo N-unyah Hunter—in 2013, apparently before his arrest. He is apparently allowed to go by this name in a Queensland prison. The question remains: how many others here in Queensland or in other jurisdictions—but this is our jurisdiction where we need to know whether the process is adequate—have done this? Attorney-General, please answer this question. Let us look at this issue. Let us see that where there are loopholes they are closed, because there are people unfortunately who seek to slip beneath the scrutiny of the public after they have committed terrible crimes.

The public as well as the victims have a right to know. I know that there may be registers that provide advice to victims, but the public also has a right to know the names of these people so that they can take appropriate action to protect their community. It is obviously a concern if people are able to change their names without the scrutiny that we believe is necessary.