




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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**CHILD PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (4.30 pm): I rise today to speak to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I am pleased to see legislation like this before the House, as child safety is one of the many important reasons that led me to stand in this House as an elected member today. As the House is well aware, I have fought alongside undoubtedly Australia's greatest child safety advocate, Hetty Johnston, for over a decade with the goal to make Australia the safest place to raise a child. Although sometimes it certainly feels like an uphill battle, I am proud of everything that Hetty and the Bravehearts team has achieved and I am truly honoured to continue to serve on the Bravehearts board.

I am especially pleased to see that Bravehearts had played an important role in the consultation of this bill. I would like to place on record comments provided by Hetty and our research director, Carol Ronken. They said—

Bravehearts is pleased to provide feedback in relation to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016.

We congratulate the Crime and Corruption Commission on its work on the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2008 and give our support for the recommendations made.

We would like to note in particular the proposed amendment around information sharing, 6. Amend the CPOPOA to improve information sharing between the Queensland Police Service and relevant agencies, and between the Queensland Police Service and members of the public.

This was recommendation No. 11 of the Crime and Corruption Commission. They continued—

We have been following the trial and subsequent roll out of Sarah's Law in the United Kingdom since 2008. As you may be aware, this law allows members of the public to ask the police whether an individual (e.g. a neighbour or family friend) is a convicted sex offender, and a form of this law has been incorporated in the Western Australia under the Community Protection Disclosure Scheme.

We wonder if this is the intention of this CCC recommendation, and we would certainly support this. It is our position that parents or carers of children do have a right to be informed on whether or not an individual who may have regular contact with their child or children is a reportable offender.

I absolutely believe that cracking down on sexual offenders, especially those who commit crimes against children, is an absolute priority for this House. The LNP has a longstanding record of standing up for children and strengthening the laws against child sexual offenders from our time in government. The most important measures included: the introduction of mandatory life imprisonment for repeat child sex offenders with a minimum non-parole period of 20 years; increased penalties for child exploitation material offences and other child sex offences; and the introduction of the new offence of 'grooming' into the Criminal Code. We also moved further amendments to allow the court to list a predator convicted of child grooming as a dangerous offender.

I believe this bill complements the strong stance the LNP took in protecting Queensland kids. The introduction of new powers to allow police to require access to information on electronic devices is vital to fighting this scourge on our society in an electronic era where, I am sure members would agree, much of our lives are dependent on our phones and computers as a primary source of communication.

Furthermore, the extension of the information-sharing network to allow government and non-government agencies to give and receive information, and protect information such as the name of the respondent or the victim, is a common-sense approach which, as Hetty and Carol raised during consultation, could potentially lead to a larger long-term information-sharing program. I am pleased to speak in support of this bill as it strengthens the protection of our children and is another important step forward in making the Bravehearts' vision of making Australia the safest place in the world to raise a child a reality.