




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (6.05 pm): I rise this afternoon to make a contribution on the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, particularly with regard to the amendments to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004.

Whether it is releasing recidivist juvenile offenders back into the community under their community bail programs, watering down bikie laws to allow criminal motorcycle gangs back into our state, or allowing child killers to receive grossly inadequate sentences for the prolonged torture and unlawful killing of defenceless, innocent children—and now overseeing the release of psychopathic paedophiles back into our society—once again this Labor government is continuing their long tradition of being soft on crime. Not only is this government soft on crime; it is continually failing in one of its highest priorities as a government, and that is to ensure the security of its citizens.

The amendments put forward by the police minister are not only weak: they are a joke. Releasing the likes of Robert Fardon back into the community and making minor amendments to the Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act—the CPOR act, as we call it in the child protection field—is manifestly inadequate. The current CPOR monitoring system and the officers who work in it are already overcome trying to remotely monitor thousands of reportable offenders who are already on the CPOR register. It is honestly an honesty system.

As the police minister stated earlier—it is even in the explanatory notes to the amendments—on being released from prison, repeat child sex offenders have reporting obligations. I can tell you that they have seven days to report their new address and other details to the police. Then their ongoing monitoring is done online or over the phone. It is an honesty system, where the onus is on the reportable offender to ring the police and advise them that his or her circumstances have changed. I repeat: it is up to the reportable offender—the repeat child sex offender listed on the CPOR register—to ring or go online and notify the police that they are now living beside a childcare centre or moving into a house with young kids.

I worked in this field right up until the last state election, and I can tell you that there are over 3,000 reportable offenders currently in this state on the CPOR register. Over 3,000 convicted paedophiles are at large in this state, and each police division has only one—in some cases two—police officers to try and keep track of these offenders. It is true that these CPOR officers do not even have an allocated police car, so it is a joke that this government thinks they can amend the CPOR Act to retrospectively make offenders like Fardon eligible to enter this system. To think that is sufficient to protect our community from serial sex offenders like Fardon is a fairytale.

Do not be mistaken or confused about the Queensland police detectives in our regional Child Protection and Investigation Units, the CPIUs. Those detectives across the state are already understaffed trying to protect the community from recidivist juvenile offenders who this government releases back into our community whilst performing their core responsibility of investigating ongoing child abuse matters.

It is not their responsibility or the responsibility of the officers in the CPIUs across the state to monitor CPOR offenders. This is done by just over 20 officers across the whole state attached to the CPOR unit at State Crime Command. If anyone tries to suggest that the hundreds of CPIU detectives across the state are also monitoring these offenders, they are misleading you. CPIU detectives will be the ones called to investigate the fresh offences committed by these grubs only after they devastate the life of another innocent victim.

In reality, if these amendments are passed Mr Fardon on his release from prison will likely get a phone call telling him he has seven days to report his new address to his local CPOR officer. There will be no active, real-time monitoring of him before or after this time, apart from his name being entered into the CPOR database with over 3,000 other reportable offenders. Police will then hope that, should any of his personal circumstances change, he will act in good faith and notify them online or via the phone.

Under these proposed amendments police cannot take further action until someone alerts them to the fact that Fardon is engaged in concerning conduct. Police can then investigate this conduct and try to obtain evidence that this conduct satisfies the grounds for an application to a court for a prohibition order. For this application, police must have evidence that the concerning conduct shows a pattern which presents a risk to the lives or sexual safety of one or more children, with the new amendment to this definition in section 13A of the CPOR act to now include 'safety or wellbeing'. Notwithstanding this, police will need to satisfy these grounds and furnish a court application for a prohibition order.

We heard earlier today about the abhorrent violent offences committed by Fardon over a lifetime of offending. On one occasion he sodomised and violently raped a woman in Townsville 20 days after being released from prison. He also has a long history of ignoring and showing contempt for any probation or parole orders placed upon him. These amendments, which have obviously been hastily slapped together over the weekend on the back of a drink coaster, are grossly inadequate. In contrast, the legislation proposed by the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Toowoomba South, is well thought out, practical, workable and would be an effective way to actively monitor in real time offenders like Fardon, and police could take action prior to any innocent victim being violently assaulted.

It is telling that the government this morning was opposed to the legislation put forward by the opposition because it might be challenged in the High Court. Although we are confident that our amendments would withstand scrutiny, this government is concerned about this tough legislation being challenged. It had no concern whatsoever when it overreached to ban property developer donations, in a blatant act to gain a political advantage, but it uses that as an excuse to shy away from legislation to protect women, kids and vulnerable people in our society. That is how out of touch and arrogant this government is.

On the other hand, the laws proposed by the opposition will strengthen legislation relating to violent child sex offenders by enhancing the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act and allowing for real-time, 24/7, active monitoring of these repeat serious sexual offenders as soon as they are released from custody and providing for GPS monitoring for life. Our laws would mean continual strict supervision. The amendments before us now only apply when police make further application to the court, once they can prove the offender has engaged in concerning conduct. For psychopathic paedophiles like Fardon, I am afraid that will be too late. Under our laws, serious repeat sex offenders will be monitored and supervised and the community will be protected.