




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2018

POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (7.54 pm): The Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and gives officers of the Queensland Police Service the powers necessary for effective and modern policing and law enforcement. It is the result of recent reviews of the system, including a 2011 Crime and Corruption Commission review of the evade police provisions, which identified a number of amendments aimed at enhancing the efficiency and quality of frontline policing services.

The bill also amends the Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004 as a result of the decision made during the May 2017 joint meeting of Attorneys-General, justice ministers and police ministers that identified that some jurisdictions have not captured all of the Commonwealth child sex offences in their reportable offender legislation. Under the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995, 10 child sex offences are not captured as reportable offences in Queensland's legislation, including trafficking in children, sexual intercourse and activity with children outside Australia, dealing in child abuse material through the post and some circumstances of aggravation offences. The bill amends schedule 1 to now include the 10 Commonwealth child sex offences as reportable offences in Queensland. Offences such as trafficking in children and sexual intercourse with a young person outside of Australia where the defendant is in a position of trust or authority have been included as reportable child sex offences in Queensland. Those 10 offences target offenders who use their position to either engage in sexual conduct or allow others to engage in sexual conduct with young persons outside Australia.

Reportable offenders who have been convicted of offences involving the administering of a child exploitation material website or encouraging a person to use such a website have also been targeted in the bill. It is the part of the bill that I would like to most address in my contribution. I support these changes, which increase public safety and improve the ability of police to protect children from predatory and exploitative behaviour by those in a position of power and authority over them. The impact of such crimes is to rob victims of a normal transition from childhood to adulthood.

It is my strong belief that all necessary steps must be taken to protect children and their families from sexual crimes. Growing community outrage at the number of sexual assaults on children committed by known offenders has resulted in increased sentencing. However, it has been widely acknowledged that the monitoring and supervision of offenders post release is inadequate and that addressing monitoring deficiencies is costly. That has led to the introduction of a national scheme that requires child sex offenders to keep police informed of their whereabouts and other personal details for a period after they are released into the community. The register is implemented to protect the community by reducing the likelihood that an offender will reoffend and to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of any future offences that may be committed.

It is my belief that the effectiveness of offender registration schemes would be strengthened by making information on certain offenders available to the community and empowering community members to assist parole services and the Queensland Police Service to monitor sexual offenders post release. I made the case for a public register when I introduced the Child Protection (Offender Reporting—Publication of Information) Amendment Bill 2013, which was rejected by the Newman government.

A public register has proven to be very successful in the jurisdictions where it has been implemented. Concerned members of the community have access to critical information, enabling them to identify reportable offenders in their neighbourhood or who have access to children in their care. I believe the government has missed an opportunity to put in place a public register that would increase public safety, improve the outcomes of the measures implemented in the amendment bill before the House and provide a further deterrent and aid in the prevention of such appalling crimes against children.

Child protection legislation needs strong bipartisan support from this parliament. It is very disappointing that this bill is being rushed through the House. As opposition members have said, the sky is not falling. I was there during the Newman government era when they smashed through the bikie laws and it cost them.

We need effective child protection policies. I really believe this needs bipartisan support. It is very disappointing that the amendments circulated today have not been through the committee system, which I do not have faith in anyway. I want to make that point to the House.