




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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MOTION

Child Sex Offender Register

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (5.20 pm): David and his two brothers were only young when their father left. When David was eight his mother, desperate for a father figure for her boys, met Manuel Siguas. As he was skilled in the art of manipulation, this vulnerable young family was an easy target for Manuel. David loved Manuel, who showered him with gifts and affection. Devastatingly, within six months Manuel was raping and molesting David.

For 10 long years it was David's way of life. Simply longing for love and the attention of a father figure, David did not know it was wrong. When he was sent down to the park to befriend other young boys and bring them home, David did not know it was wrong. When Manuel invited other adult males over for drinks and they used him as a sex toy, David did not know it was wrong. David did not know it was wrong until he walked into the Sunshine Coast district Child Protection and Investigation Unit to seek some advice when he was 18 years old. A few days later he returned to the house of horrors, the house where his life had been destroyed, to confront the monster who destroyed it—but this time, bravely, he was wearing a wire. My team and I had the house surrounded. We were listening intently—waiting, praying for the admissions we needed to storm the house and make an arrest. Unfortunately, this story is not unique. There are many more that are just as horrific.

In the short time I have this afternoon I want to talk about three things: why the current child protection offender reporting system, known as CPOR, is broken; how the LNP's sensible policy could have saved David and many other vulnerable young kids like him; and how other jurisdictions have used this solution to successfully address this problem.

There are currently around 2,800 registered child sex offenders in Queensland—2,800 offenders like Robert John Fardon who have been convicted of molesting young children; 2,800 offenders, some worse than Fardon, at large in our community, possibly living right next door to you and you would not know. Making matters worse, these offenders are being monitored by only 33 police officers—33 overstretched, underfunded and under-resourced officers. On the Sunshine Coast there is only one CPOR officer trying to monitor around 130 child sex offenders. In some police districts the ratio is one officer to 180 offenders. These officers do not even have police cars. They rely on the honesty and integrity of upstanding, law-abiding paedophiles living in our community to report online any change in their circumstances—like, for example, that they have befriended a family with three vulnerable young boys.

The system is broken. That is why I strongly support the motion moved today by the member for Toowoomba North. The introduction of a public child sex offender register will give every parent an effective tool to protect their child from paedophiles. The register will put innocent and vulnerable children before the interests of paedophiles living in our communities. It includes robust safeguards to protect against vigilantes, with any person misusing the information liable to up to 10 years in prison.

Similar laws in Western Australia and the UK have been effective and are used responsibly by the community. The system has been operating in Western Australia for five years and has proven to be successful. Why does Labor not trust the community to use the information sensibly and not misuse it? What will it take for Labor to put our kids before paedophiles?

Manuel Siguas had a long history of offending against children, including offences overseas and interstate. A public register may have saved David and his family from more than 10 years of horrific abuse. It is one thing to fail on roads, to fail on trains, to fail on hospitals, to fail on debt and to fail on energy, but you cannot get much lower than failing our kids. If this government supports the right of every Queensland child to live without the threat of abuse, it must support this motion.

In closing, I am pleased to advise the House that Manuel Siguas is now serving 16 years in jail for the rape and indecent treatment of seven young boys spanning two decades. David, not his real name, has recently celebrated the birth of his first child. He is trying hard to repair his life and I wish him well, but it should never have come to this.