




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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MOTION

Child Sex Offender Register

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.50 pm): The first responsibility of any government is to protect the community. There is no-one more important in our community than our children. As a previous speaker on the LNP side has said tonight, here we have an opportunity to listen to our communities which are screaming out for a public register of child sex offenders. Tonight in this chamber we have heard some heartbreaking stories. I want to thank those members for putting on record their stories on behalf of the children of this state.

I also want to highlight the combined years of experience that we have on this side of the chamber in the child protection investigation unit. The member for Bundaberg spent two years of his life in that unit protecting our children. The member for Nicklin, who spoke in this chamber tonight, spent three years protecting Queensland children in that unit. The member for Ninderry, who spoke in the chamber tonight, spent 10 years listening, hearing and understanding what the community want and need in relation to the protection of children. We have listened to our communities.

The deputy leader, Tim Mander; the shadow police minister, the member for Toowoomba North; and I have held crime forums across the state and listened to communities. With the release of Robert John Fardon, the No. 1 issue in crime forums was not the fact that under Labor the budget has gone down and the police are screaming out for resources, it is not the fact that the bikies are back on the Gold Coast, it is not the fact that many get their cars stolen from out the front of their workplaces, it is not the fact that their houses are getting broken into; it is the fact that they do not know that their children are safe because where the heavens is Robert John Fardon living? That is the No. 1 issue.

Sharon Tomlinson and Stephen Cohen—two survivors of that vile human being who violated those two good people as children—and the police officers on this side of the chamber are the people I believe in. They are the people who the LNP have based this policy on. They are the people who are crying out for change. They are crying out for more building blocks to keep our communities safe. We on this side of the chamber have never said that this is the solution. We have never said that this is the one thing that will fix everything. What we have said is that this is but one building block in keeping our communities safe. Communities around Queensland are asking us why we are trusting a serial sex offender—who has done time, been released and reoffended—to tell us where he lives. We are trusting a serial sex offender who is out on our streets to self-report? No-one in our community knows where this man is. We are meant to trust a serial sex offender.

We have listened to those on this side of the chamber who have worked in the field, we have listened to survivors like Sharon Tomlinson and Stephen Cohen, and we have listened to our communities. They have asked us to put forward as a policy a child sex offender register, and that is exactly what we have done. I plead with the Labor Party to back the LNP's policy and implement a child sex offender register.