




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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MOTION

Child Sex Offender Register

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (5.30 pm): With every part of my heart I wish that we could simply leave this matter to the police. I wish that it was as simple as saying that the police are monitoring this issue in our communities so that we can all sleep well at night. Recently I heard that police from the Southport station were not only undermanned by about a dozen officers but the officers that it had were being used to help ferry prisoners from the Southport watch house to the Brisbane Watch House and back again because of the increased demand for juvenile detention at the Brisbane Watch House. Unfortunately, our police are not there. They are not always available when we need them to monitor this issue in our community. I would simply say that people need to know where these offenders are. As a parent and as a grandparent now, I believe that our kids and our families have a right to know what is going on in their neighbourhoods. If there is a family dealing drugs up the street, it is usually pretty obvious. If there is a household in the street that is doing a few break and enters or driving illegal cars or undertaking other illegal practices, it is usually pretty obvious. Unfortunately, you cannot trust sex offenders and it is not always obvious.

In 1969 a client of my dad sexually abused me as a 10-year-old child—and it only happened once, and I thank God that it only happened once—but it was not until 1998 that it occurred to me that maybe I should do something about that. I went to the Surfers Paradise Police Station then as an adult and reported it because I thought, 'If they've got other evidence on this particular person, it might just be my testimony that helps bring this perpetrator to justice.' I was pleased to find out that the perpetrator had since deceased, and I will not go so far as to say what I was thinking about saying with respect to paedophiles. We cannot trust these people and I believe that we do have a right as a community and as a society to know where they are.

The minister, in response to a question that I placed on notice in February, advised that there are some 3,486 reportable offenders in Queensland. I want to know where they are. Very recently I had cause to pull my son aside because he was planning to go visit somewhere in Queensland. I had to pull him aside and suggest that maybe they should stay somewhere else because I had concerns for the safety of my first granddaughter.

This is an insidious and heartbreaking act. The perpetrators often cannot help themselves. The perpetrators are often recidivist. In the interests of protecting our kids, I believe that families absolutely deserve to know where paedophiles are—where sex offenders are living—and there needs to be tougher legislation. That is why I am more than proud to stand up this evening to speak in support of the LNP's policy and proposal on this. Our plan would also require the establishment of a missing offenders' register which would display photos and personal details of people who fail to report, and how important is that? We would also implement a local offender search which would provide parents with the ability to uncover photographs of child sex offenders who live in their suburb. We would also

implement a community protection disclosure scheme so that parents or guardians would be able to apply to the police to inquire if a person who has regular unsupervised contact with their child is a reportable offender.

Both sides of the House have undertaken many measures to deal with this issue, but I would simply suggest that we cannot go far enough. There is no reform that will ever be enough and every child in our state deserves to enjoy the freedom and the privilege of growing up in a state where they are free from harm, where their innocence is protected and they are given every opportunity to thrive without the damaging effects of sexual abuse occurring in their lives.