



Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 March 2019

**MOTION**

**Child Sex Offender Register**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.00 pm): I move—

That this House calls on the Palaszczuk government to implement the LNP's plan for a public child sex offender register.

I want to start today by quoting the Premier. She said—

This issue has been canvassed at length over many, many years. It has been genuinely the view of most people that a register at this point in time is not needed. However, having said that, of course we are a government that listens and we are more than happy to speak to people about any views that they particularly have.

That was said in September 2017. Let's find out if this government will listen. Let's find out if this government will listen, because the public are very clear on their view of what should happen with regard to a public sex offender register.

I want to outline a little bit about the LNP's proposal so people can understand. The LNP has been leading this charge because we truly care about the safety of our most vulnerable in our community: our children. We believe that parents and communities deserve the ability to protect their family members and their children. Knowledge and information is always going to be power when it comes to who people's neighbours are, where they live and who has access to their children. The LNP will always favour community safety over child sex offenders. We need this register in order to deal with these people and to ensure that families have the opportunity to protect their loved ones.

Let's have a look at what it is we are proposing. The LNP's plan would provide parents with access to three tiers of information on sex offenders. The first one is a missing offenders register. Under the honour system that exists at the moment, if someone fails to register, nothing particularly happens. Having a missing offenders register would mean that their photos would be displayed and the community would be able to look at the missing offenders register to be alert and be observant in their community if they see this person.

The local offender search is the second tranche, where someone can input their suburb after being correctly registered and then uncover photographs of child sex offenders who live in their suburb or adjacent suburbs. I believe the community should have the right to view the photographs of child sex offenders living in their community so they can identify them. If they are in someone's street or if they are a neighbour, those people should at least know the offender's history so they can protect their family.

The third tranche is a community protection disclosure scheme. Parents or guardians will be able to apply to the police to enquire if a person who has regular, unsupervised contact with their child is a reportable sex offender. Anyone who uses false information to request a disclosure or misuses the information provided by police could face seven years imprisonment.

This is a very important part of the legislation. We are not looking to start vigilantism in our community. We have very strong legislation that empowers the community and empowers families to understand who their neighbours are. However, there are also very strong protections to make sure that the police apply the rule of law clearly in Queensland. People can use this to protect their families, they can use this to take precautions, but they cannot use it to take the law into their own hands. That will always be unacceptable to the LNP. We need to make sure that people have the information.

We know that this legislation is working well in Western Australia. We know that it is working in England and Wales. My question to the Premier and to those in the government is: if the release of Robert John Fardon is not a wake-up call and a red flag that we need to change the way we manage this kind of offender in our community, then what is? We were told that he would be GPS tracked, but we know he is not. We were told that we would be able to know where he is, but we do not. Stephen Cohen, a survivor of Robert John Fardon, condemned Labor for their actions by saying—

Labor have shown their contempt for the ordinary people in the street. Their solution was to gag Sharon—

*(Time expired)*