




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 27 March 2019

MOTION

Child Sex Offender Register

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (5.55 pm): I rise to speak in opposition to this motion. In doing so I say that this government is determined to make Queensland the safest place to live and raise a family. The protection of our children and our community is of vital importance. Those are not my words—but I absolutely endorse them and it is the view of this government—those are the words of the former minister for police, fire and emergency services, the former member for Bundaberg, the honourable Jack Dempsey, when he stood in this chamber in 2014 to argue why he did not support a public register in the form of the Western Australian model in a debate on a private member's bill. He stood and he praised the child protection offender reporting scheme as a strong scheme.

Mrs Frecklington: He is no longer in the parliament.

Mrs D'ATH: I will take the interjection from the member for Nanango that he is not here anymore, but the member for Toowoomba North is. He was a member of the parliamentary committee that considered that bill and made one recommendation—that the bill not be passed—and in doing so reflected the various concerns of many stakeholders in relation to that bill.

What the LNP said at that time is that they would be watching the Western Australian model but they want to see it comprehensively reviewed first. There has not been a review of that, but there has been a paper released by the Australian government Australian Institute of Criminology titled *Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice*, a review of empirical studies of the US, the UK and the Australian jurisdictions in relation to a public and non-public offender registry. I strongly encourage those on the other side to read that. I am happy to table a copy because I think it is important when we are out talking to the public and victims to explain why it is that we have to be careful about public registers.

Tabled paper: Australian Institute of Criminology: Document, dated May 2018, titled 'Trends & Issues in crime and criminal justice: What impact do public sex registries have on community safety?' [\[419\]](#).

We have heard from those on the other side, and this motion, that we should be implementing the LNP's plan. With all due respect, it is a media release. Where is the detailed plan? The media release states that it is modelled on systems in Western Australia and the UK. Bravehearts, in releasing its own discussion paper on November 2017 on community notification of sex offenders, said—

The registry that operates in Western Australia differs from sex offender registries implemented in the US and UK. The criteria for offenders listed on the register in Western Australia are further restricted, only showing dangerous, high-risk and recidivist offenders who reside in close proximity to the person conducting the search.

They are not the same systems. We are asked to vote in this House to implement a plan, but we do not know which plan is being talked about. Members opposite have referred to the US plan, the UK plan and the Western Australian plan. What is the actual plan? Is it a broad plan that picks up everyone that CP(OR)A picks up? Is it only dangerous, high-risk, recidivist offenders? If it is the Western Australian system, the Institute of Criminology report states—

The WA semi-public sex offender registry's impact on recidivism has yet to be measured. However, interviews with key stakeholders, including police and practitioners, have raised concerns that public registration is counter-rehabilitative and could increase the risk of reoffending.

Let us assume we are basing this on the West Australian model, and we have just heard that those opposite do not like CP(OR)A. Somehow it is an honour system. It is a voluntary system. There is a lawful obligation to report, but failing to report is an offence that carries up to five years imprisonment. That is like saying, 'Drink-driving is voluntary. It is honorary. You do not have to follow the law if you do not want to.' Those opposite say that everyone has a right to know where Robert John Fardon is. It is important to note that, if we want to rely on the West Australian system, right now in Western Australia there are 25 serious, high-risk sex offenders missing, and one of them has been missing since 2002. Those opposite should not lead victims to believe that this will give them security. Read the evidence. This is complex. You have to base it on evidence.

(Time expired)