




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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CHILD PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING AND OFFENDER PROHIBITION ORDER) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.50 pm): I rise in support of the Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. As we know, technology is constantly evolving: we see it in our everyday lives. Whilst that brings benefits, it also means that the methodologies used by those who wish to visit harm onto others are also evolving as that technology evolves. The bill that is currently before the House which we are debating is a bill that gives our police additional detection, investigation and enforcement powers to catch and disrupt the efforts of those who would wish to visit harm upon the most vulnerable in our society—our children. These are vile offenders that have evil in their hearts. That is the primary objective of this bill.

This bill seeks to achieve that objective through enhancing and expanding the range of tools and strategies that will help keep Queensland children safe. We will do this through technology that is based on catching offenders that are using anonymising software or vault and black hole applications, anonymising software such as virtual private networks and Tor software—technologies that have provided new ways for child sexual offenders to engage in grooming and offending against children without leaving their home and unable to be detected because this software helps prevent their identity being tracked. A person who is using this anonymising software can access, disseminate or receive information without their personal information, including their geolocation, being revealed to others, including our police. It hinders and prevents our police from monitoring the online activities of these offenders.

This bill requires reportable offenders to report the possession or use of this anonymising software as a personal detail, and it also requires that these offenders also report what is called vault and black hole applications. These are applications that are designed to hide digital information and keep it secure. These applications can look like common desktop icons—for example, a calculator. They do have legitimate uses because people use them to store their sensitive personal information, such as banking or business information, but there are those such as these vile offenders who use these applications for nefarious purposes. This bill requires that the possession or use of these vault or black hole applications are reported to the police.

The bill also provides amendment for the framework around device inspections where reportable offenders that are convicted of an offence under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act are subject to device inspections. This bill empowers police to be able to enter the residences of these reportable offenders to undertake an inspection, and require offenders to produce each device they possess or use for inspection. This bill includes an offence provision where a reportable offender fails to comply with this requirement to produce a digital device. This new offence is an indictable offence with a maximum penalty of 300 penalty units or five years imprisonment. It is good to see these offence provisions being substantially strengthened.

The bill also expands the number of prescribed internet offences by an additional nine offences which have been included to catch child sexual offenders, including such things as child exploitation material offences, trafficking and grooming offences. Importantly, these new prescribed offences will operate retrospectively to ensure all reportable offenders who have been convicted of these offences are subject to much higher levels of monitoring by police.

It was a Queensland Labor government that introduced the Dangerous Prisoner (Sexual Offenders) Act in 2003 and the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act in 2004—the strongest legislation in the nation at the time and which was copied by other jurisdictions. It is the Palaszczuk government that recently increased reporting periods for child sex offenders to 10 years for the first reportable offence, 20 years for the second and then reporting for life for subsequent offences.

To contrast that with the record of the LNP when they were last in government, they cut police monitoring of sex offenders, they closed prisons and they sacked police and corrective services staff. I want to acknowledge the work as a corrective officer of the member for Caloundra who has spoken in this place about his personal experience and his colleagues' experiences under an LNP government and how their cuts and their sackings absolutely decimated corrective services here in Queensland. The LNP in government cut the monitoring of more than 1,700 sex offenders. This is despite the LNP having evidence that 14 to 16 per cent of sex offenders reoffend in the first five years after their release. The very evidence that the LNP relied on at the time to justify cutting the monitoring of these 1,700 offenders from the Child Protection Offender Register indicated that they were still at risk of reoffending.

Under the watch of the LNP we saw a murderer escape from low security, we saw a serial paedophile who was caught kissing and groping a 12-year-old boy in public—we saw so many instances of horrible, vile crimes after they cut the monitoring of these sex offenders.

I am proud to be able to stand in this place to support this bill under the Palaszczuk Labor government that is going to bring forward a tougher, more stringent and more effective set of laws and regulations that will empower our police to monitor, to catch and to punish vile sexual offenders in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.