




Speech By
Hon. Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

Record of Proceedings, 30 October 2025

**COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND PUBLIC CHILD SEX OFFENDER REGISTER
(DANIEL'S LAW) BILL**

 **Hon. DG PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (5.28 pm), in reply: I want to thank all honourable members who have contributed to the debate on the Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register (Daniel's Law) Bill. I acknowledge Bruce and Denise Morcombe, who are in the gallery again this evening for this momentous occasion. As we know, this bill is called Daniel's Law in honour of their son. I thank Bruce and Denise Morcombe for their more than two decades of advocacy through the Daniel Morcombe Foundation. This bill reflects their strong resolve to ensure the safety and protection of all children. Daniel's legacy is to keep kids safe and Daniel's Law will help do just that.

Through this bill, the Crisafulli government is delivering on its commitment to restore safety in our communities. This government is strengthening child protection laws by putting the rights of children and parents ahead of the rights of sexual predators. We must do everything to keep Queensland children safe from sexual harm. The public register will ensure Queensland families have access to information to make informed decisions when it comes to protecting their children. It begs the question: why has it taken so long?

Yesterday I was with the Morcombes when someone from the media asked that question, and it is a good question. I think the answer became obvious during the debate when members opposite, even senior members such as the shadow attorney-general, raised baseless assertions about the need for an extra 100 police and the millions of dollars required to maintain the system. For 10 years the Morcombe family lobbied those opposite. Labor never even had the decency to pick up the phone to the police in Western Australia, who have been operating this system for over a decade, to find out the answers to those resourcing questions. We did and the answer is three. In Western Australia, three staff are required to monitor and operate their system.

I can tell members that their system is a paper system where people are asked to download a form, fill it out, scan it and send it back. As we have announced, we are investing \$10 million to devise and develop a system that will be easy for parents and caregivers to quickly make an application to get the information they need to put protective strategies in place around their child. I asked that question. For 10 years the Morcombes have been asking for this and in this debate we heard some of the excuses that those opposite gave not to do it.

Similarly, questions raised about vigilantism, retraumatisation and the identification of victims have not proved to be an issue elsewhere. The committee report states—

The committee is encouraged by the experience of Western Australia which suggests that the risk of vigilantism and physical retribution against child sex offenders following the provision of information from the public register is very low. The committee also understands that Western Australia has not experienced any issues in relation to the identification of victims because of its public register.

However, I will note the differing approaches taken by some of those opposite—namely, the member for Nudgee, a former child safety minister, and the member for Gaven, the opposition attorney-general. On the one hand, we have a reasoned optimistic argument; on the other, we have a poorly disguised ideological tirade that demonstrates deep prejudice and a failure to accept the need for change. While accepting some practical concerns about aspects of the bill, the member for Nudgee was prepared to accept that those who supported it were genuine in their advocacy. Her remarks concentrated on how this legislation will keep children safe, rather than trying to drum up unsubstantiated fears about the reform. She put the issue of child safety at the top of the priority list and it is for that that she must be acknowledged. On the other hand, the member for Gaven spent most of her contribution reading from the ALP talking notes, promoting a series of unlikely outcomes and endeavouring to raise unfounded concerns around, as I said, 100 extra police being required while protesting that she supports the legislation. They are typical Labor tactics as they seek to explain away why they did not introduce this reform during their decade in office.

Yesterday the Minister for Youth Justice issued a challenge to Labor members: to front up in this debate and tell Queenslanders where they stand. Few have responded, including the opposition leader and the two members squabbling over his job: the deputy leader, the member for Woodridge, and the shadow treasurer, the member for Waterford. I call on ALP members to nail their colours to the mast and reveal exactly what they think about this reform.

Moving to resourcing, the Crisafulli government is delivering what Labor failed to do: Queensland's first-ever public child sex offender register. This landmark reform is backed by \$10 million in dedicated funding to establish the register and ensure it is implemented effectively. The Queensland Police Service already has specialist capability units with statewide responsibility for preventing, disrupting, monitoring, responding to and investigating child sex offenders. The new public register will be managed within the existing child protection offender registry, supported by a dedicated team responsible for its administration and ongoing operation which will be fully funded. The child protection offender registry team is based across Queensland and already performs critical work managing the existing non-public register. Those highly trained staff are experts in best practice offender management and have a proven record of keeping communities safe.

Several members of the opposition have expressed concern that the public register may create a false sense of security within the community. The public register is designed to complement, not substitute for, existing initiatives that keep our communities safe. It is merely an additional protective tool. All visitors to the community protection website will have access to protective safety and child protection information to keep children safe and will be required to acknowledge the limitations of the public register. Additionally, the Queensland police will work with other government departments and advocacy groups to ensure public communication and messaging provides adequate awareness of child safety risks beyond offenders who may be identified through the public register. The community protection website will also provide support and resources for members of the community who want to provide police with information about a person they believe or know poses a sexual risk to a child.

Concerns have also been raised that the number of people captured by tier 2 is significantly less than the total number of reportable offenders. Tier 2 has been specifically designed to capture the most serious class of offenders. It is consistent with the models implemented in Western Australia and soon to be implemented in South Australia. Therefore, it follows that the number of people who fall within tier 2 will be lower than the total number of reportable offenders. It is important to note that, if the Police Commissioner considers at any time that a reportable offender poses a risk to the lives or sexual safety of one or more children or of children generally, the Police Commissioner may deem the offender to be a serious-risk offender and therefore included within tier 2.

Several members, in particular the member for Jordan and the member for Maiwar, noted that the majority of child sex offenders are people who are known to the child and their family. It is recognised that risks to children do arise from within trusted circles. That is precisely why tier 3, the parent and guardian disclosure framework, is such an important part of the public register. Under tier 3, a parent, guardian or person with ongoing parental responsibility for a child will be able to apply to confirm whether a person who has or will have unsupervised contact with their child is a current reportable offender. This contact includes any form of communication, whether in person or through electronic means. Even when a 'no' response is provided, applicants will receive material that promotes the use of proactive protective behaviours to help keep their children safe.

The member for Gladstone and the member for Noosa raised concerns about the statutory five-year review period. They called for an earlier interim review and ongoing monitoring of the public register to ensure early identification and rectification of any unintended impacts. The bill includes a statutory review of the public register to take place as soon as practicable following five years of

operation. This review will provide an important opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the public register and make any necessary adjustments to ensure it continues to serve its intended purpose. It will give the government a substantial period to understand the trends, the impacts and the volume of traffic that we see through the register. It will ensure a fulsome review is conducted. The findings of the review will be tabled and made publicly available through this assembly.

The member for Gladstone and the member for Nudgee expressed concerns about the risk of victims being identified through the public register. Protecting future child victims from harm is a core principle underpinning the public register. It strikes an appropriate balance with the need to make information available so that parents and families can protect their children and strongly promotes leveraging existing support services to ensure the dignity, safety and privacy of those most affected by crimes committed against them by sexual predators.

The bill introduces an effective safeguard through the broad discretionary power for the Police Commissioner to have regard to particular matters when determining whether to release information about reportable offenders. The government acknowledges that a small portion of victims may wish to express their views and make a submission in relation to the disclosure and publication of a person who has offended against them. However, this small percentage may be outweighed by decisions that are based on crime prevention, making information accessible to the community to protect children, preventing future harm and potentially reducing child victims of sexual crimes. The Crisafulli government takes this matter extremely seriously and it is resolute that victims must never be retraumatised.

The member for Gladstone noted the lack of evidence supporting the protective impact of public sex offender registers. The purpose of the public register is to increase community awareness and vigilance by making certain information about particular reportable offenders available to the public. All visitors to the website will also have access to protective child safety information to enhance understanding of child sexual offending and promote shared responsibility for keeping children safe. This approach provides a proactive tool to enable parents, guardians and the wider community to have the information to act to reduce risk and better protect the lives and sexual safety of Queensland children.

The member for Macalister and the member for Maiwar raised the issues of the discretionary powers provided to the Police Commissioner. This government is committed to ensuring decisions made under Daniel's Law are guided by fairness and careful consideration. The bill grants the Police Commissioner broad discretion to release or not release information about reportable offenders. In making such decisions, the Police Commissioner may have regard to all relevant matters. This could include conviction history, the effect of publication on an ongoing investigation, the offender's compliance with reporting obligations, any available or credible intelligence and any impacts on victims, where these are known. The Police Commissioner will also retain discretion to not release information under tier 2 in particular circumstances.

I take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge officers from the Queensland Police Service, in particular those officers within the CPOR, the Child Protection Offender Register, and our CPIU, Child Protection Investigation Unit, officers who work each and every day to keep Queensland children safe. I also wish to thank: the Police Commissioner; Deputy Commissioner Cheryl Scanlon; Detective Superintendent Denzil Clark; Detective Acting Superintendent Stephen Blanchfield; Acting Director Andrea Joseph; manager Jessica Mudryk; manager Andrew Wilson; manager Hannah Murphy; Principal Policy Officer, Jayme Say; Senior Strategy Officer, Cristina Vitanzi; and Senior Sergeant Michael Webb.

I also wish to acknowledge departmental staff within the Department of Justice and the co-signatory to this bill, the Attorney, and her team for the assistance they provided in the development of this work. I acknowledge the staff in the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel for their work on this bill.

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to again acknowledge Bruce and Denise Morcombe for their tireless advocacy, for standing up when others would have collapsed in grief, for their strength and determination to make change and for their unrelenting pursuit to protect children from the monsters who hide in plain sight. Bruce and Denise, you have inspired Queensland and inspired our nation. This legislation carries your son's name, but it carries your legacy too. You never gave up. I commend the bill to the House.

Question put—That the bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. DG PURDIE (Ninderry—LNP) (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (5.42 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. DG PURDIE (Ninderry—LNP) (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (5.43 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.