




Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.36 pm): I rise in support of Daniel's Law today, the Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register. At the outset, as so many speakers have done, I place on record my deep and abiding respect for the Morcombes, Denise and Bruce, whom I can see sitting up in the gallery today, for their unwavering and steadfast commitment to keeping all of our Queensland children safe. As many members on both sides of the House have also said, it is truly beyond comprehension how they have endured the loss that they have and been able to come out the other side and not just endure that loss but then turn it into meaningful and ongoing reform. That is not just the legislation that we have before us, which is very meaningful and incredibly significant legislation that we are going to pass today, but also the ongoing work they have done for over 20 years.

We know that tomorrow is the Day for Daniel. It is a day that every member of this House and I think almost every young child in Queensland, including my own, can tell you about. I take this opportunity to encourage members of the parliament, but especially members of my Mount Ommaney community, to have a look at the resources that are available online through the Day for Daniel website and then, as the member for Logan has said, take a moment to discuss those resources with your young people. Talk to them about what you have learned from those resources and talk to them about those uncomfortable situations. The fact is that these are the conversations we dread having with our young people. We dread having that conversation because we dread the idea that they might be exposed to a predator; even more, we dread the idea that they may have already been exposed to a predator.

When my daughter Allegra participated in the Day for Daniel as a primary school student, I asked her about what she had learned. She certainly talked about the stranger danger aspect that I think many members of this House were taught; that was the kind of education we got about the dangers in our community. As a young child, the term 'stranger danger' was quite prevalent. She also learned on the Day for Daniel about the predators who hide in plain sight—those predators who are known to the family and are either a member of that family or seeking to ingratiate themselves into a family so they can have easier access to young people.

That thought chills us all because we have heard in recent months about people who work with young children, and there is a lot of work being undertaken right now in our early childhood sector. We have so many wonderful people who work in early childhood and do such a great job, so it is a shame in some ways that those wonderful, hardworking educators feel the brunt of that extra scrutiny. But that scrutiny is required to make sure we can protect our innocent and vulnerable children, many of whom cannot even yet put a name to their own body parts.

Allegra spoke with me about the resources that she learned about when she participated in Day for Daniel. This register will be a tool in an arsenal that comprises several weapons, if you like, in the fight against child predators. The register will allow some people to be checked. However, it is also important that we continue to empower our children to trust their gut and know that they can have those

conversations with their trusted people. As many members of this House have acknowledged, we will never, unfortunately, be able to truly eradicate the kinds of people who perpetrate these crimes, but we need to make sure that if it does happen our young people feel empowered to go to their trusted people—their parents, their teachers—and share what has happened so we can start that journey of healing with them.

This bill is a profound and important piece of legislation, and I am proud that we have such strong support right across the parliament for it. Like you, Deputy Speaker Furner, I was not sure whether I would be able to get up and speak on this bill today for reasons that are known to me and my family. Therefore, it was very disappointing to hear members opposite speaking about people who have chosen to not make a contribution. It is important to note that in bills that bring up traumatic subjects every member may be experiencing different things at different times and those traumatic subjects can impact members in very upsetting and mentally traumatic ways. Sometimes members make the choice that they cannot speak on a particular issue on a particular day.

I know that everybody who votes for this bill supports this bill. I support the bill very strongly for all of the young people who have been impacted by these heinous crimes. This bill is another tool in the Queensland parliament's arsenal to protect young people, and that is so important to me. I think it is really important that we do come together in a bipartisan way on bills like this and that members do not reflect on the willingness of other members to speak. The subject matters in these bills are incredibly traumatic and it is important that we respect the lived experiences of other members in this House. If we cannot do that and show each other that basic kindness and respect, then I really do despair for this place. I commend this wonderful bill to the House.