



Speech By **Hon. Mark Furner**

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 30 October 2025

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

 Hon. ML FURNER (Ferny Grove—ALP) (4.02 pm): I rise to make a short contribution on what will be known as Daniel's Law. Initially, I felt that I would not be able to speak on this bill for personal reasons—reasons that relate to one of my siblings when she was young. I acknowledge the contribution the member for Caloundra made. There will be members in this chamber, no doubt, who will have reservations on speaking on particular parts, if not all, of this bill due to their involvement or close family involvement. I will not be drawn into discussing anything on my sibling related to this bill. I feel it too hurtful and something I cannot bring myself to, so I will keep it relevant to other parts and my experience not only in this place but also externally in respect to the nature of this bill.

I commend the submitters and the committee for its work on this bill. There is one recommendation: that this bill be passed. I acknowledge that we have a consensus of parliament in passing this bill here today.

I will never stand by and support someone who steals the innocence of a child and commits these heinous crimes against the youth in our society. It is a disgusting act. This parliament today will come together and bring, to some degree, a close to those sorts of actions. We have heard today that it is not possible to ever guarantee the full protection of our youth, but every measure we can do as a parliament towards that is worthwhile doing and worthwhile trialling.

I want to commend Bruce and Denise Morcombe for their endeavours. I have known them prior to coming into this place from working in another parliament, and I have always been encouraged by the tireless work they do. As a parent—and there are many parents in this chamber—I cannot imagine what it would be like to go through that happening to one of your own children, to experience those outcomes, and then set on a course of looking to assist our youth right throughout our country. They are highly commendable people. They are amazing. When you look at their bravery in the face of such unbelievable grief, it is outstanding. To have lost a child in the most horrific way and then dedicating their lives to doing what they can do to keep children safe is such a tribute to them. The work they do through the Daniel Morcombe Foundation has made a real difference and something they have every right to be proud of.

Tomorrow marks the 21st Day for Daniel, and I am sure every one of us will be out in our communities supporting the foundation and supporting Bruce and Denise in their continuing endeavours. I have seen them in action at Ferny Grove State School in the past, and I am very pleased with the development of their contributions in educating children into the future.

There was a time some years ago when I was foreman on a jury where we had to deliberate on a paedophilia case—an Italian father who had committed acts of sexual violence against his own daughter. It was a compelling case. It was a case where, fortunately, by the end of the deliberations, the jury saw eye to eye and we committed that person to the rightful place that he deserved, to answer for his crimes.

Closer to home in my electorate I met with some constituents in 2022 who were seeking answers over concerns of their daughter's situation regarding sexual abuse in a childcare centre. Having spoken with officers from the Ferny Grove police station, with whom we have an excellent working relationship, it became apparent that the Australian Federal Police was investigating this case as well, so unfortunately we could not provide information back to that couple with regard to particular circumstances of what happened to their daughter and what was occurring throughout their grieving process. We now know the perpetrator was Ashley Paul Griffith, Australia's most prolific paedophile, a childcare worker, who was sentenced to life in prison for his offending against young girls. Griffith abused 65 girls at 11 Brisbane childcare centres over a 20-year period. He pleaded guilty to 307 offences, including 28 offences of rape and 190 counts of indecent treatment of a child in his care.

I want to commend another parliament that is dealing with issues in child care at present and that is the Albanese government which is proposing measures to combat child abuse in childcare centres. The government has introduced legislation to parliament to lift child safety in early education and care services, so there are other people in our country who are doing similar to what we are doing here today. That legislation will give the Commonwealth government the power to cut off funding to childcare centres that do not meet the National Quality Standard when it comes to safety and quality, where there is a breach of law, or where centres are acting in a way that puts the safety of children at risk. That legislation will allow Commonwealth officers to perform spot checks without warning to detect fraud and noncompliance across the sector. I commend that parliament for their endeavours. I was only recently this week watching *Four Corners* on the ABC on what is happening in childcare centres. This is a universal problem—not only in this country, but the world. It is important we act on these measures to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Specifically to the bill, it is broadly based on the Western Australian model which was established in 2012. It will insert a new part 5AA into the Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004, providing for the release of limited information on some reportable offenders through a three-tier system. I will not go through that three-tier system; that has been ventilated today in people's contributions.

When we were in government we certainly brought in laws. We increased the monitoring of first-time offenders from five years to 10 years. We increased the monitoring of repeat offenders from 10 years to 20 years or life. Over the last couple of days I have been frustrated to hear some people claiming this bill as a particular party's position. There are times that we need to be respectful and measured in this place and demonstrate some bipartisanship, especially when it comes to matters like this. I cannot imagine Bruce or Denise being satisfied or comfortable with some of the deliberations they have heard during these proceedings today.

This parliament should be more professional and more measured when passing legislation like this which will protect the children in our society. It is not a time for branding. It is not a time for claiming, 'It's my bill,' or saying the other party did something when they were in government. We need to come together and be more professional and respectful. We need to pass this bill, which is what the committee recommended. I commend the bill to the House.