




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

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

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (12.13 pm): It is with great pride and deep personal conviction that I rise to speak in support of the Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register (Daniel's Law) Bill 2025. I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat for the work they did on the bill.

Out of all the bills I will ever debate in this House, I can say without hesitation that this will stand among those I am most proud to support. This bill, Daniel's Law, is of course named in memory of Daniel Morcombe—a young Sunshine Coast boy whose abduction and murder nearly 22 years ago shook our entire state to its core. Daniel's legacy, through the tireless work of his parents, Bruce and Denise Morcombe, has become one of education, advocacy and reform. Their efforts have saved countless children from harm. Today's bill further honours that legacy.

When Daniel was abducted, I was serving as a police officer on the Sunshine Coast. I remember vividly the shock and anguish that rippled through our community and the outpouring of support for Bruce and Denise that followed. That moment marked a turning point for the Sunshine Coast, and for Queensland. It reminded us that protecting children is not just a job for police and governments; it is the responsibility of every single one of us.

Throughout my policing career the most challenging but most rewarding were the years I spent as a detective in the child abuse unit, investigating and charging those who prey on children. I saw firsthand the devastation these offenders cause. In 2017, I had the privilege of appearing with Bruce and Denise on a national video project—Australia's Biggest Child Safety Lesson—that helped parents and children talk about recognising abuse, reacting and reporting. That work of the Morcombes continues with a new version being released soon. All of these are tools to protect children, and this bill is just another tool to add to the important mix.

This bill delivers on a promise we made before the election to establish a public child sex offender register in Queensland. It is a commitment to give parents and carers the information they need to protect their children while ensuring safeguards against misuse of that information. The register will operate through three distinct tiers under the act.

Tier 1 will provide a publicly accessible list of missing or noncompliant reportable offenders—those who have breached their reporting obligations or cannot be located. Anyone will be able to see this information without applying. Tier 2 allows members of the public to conduct a locality search for reportable serious offenders living in a particular area—providing a protection tool for families in their own neighbourhoods. Tier 3, the most targeted level, enables parents and guardians to make an application to the Queensland Police Service if they have a reasonable belief that someone who has contact with their child may be a convicted child sex offender. Police can then disclose relevant information to help those parents protect their children.

I know from my time in the child abuse unit that predators seek out vulnerable families to gain access to children. Parents have a right to know if a new partner, a new boarder or someone who offers to help look after their children is a reportable sex offender. These are measured, responsible tiers—balancing the public's right to know with the need to prevent vigilantism.

The bill also creates new offences for the misuse or unauthorised sharing of register information and for inciting harassment or intimidation of offenders. Importantly, it provides broad protections from liability for those who administer the register and establishes a statutory review to ensure the scheme continues to protect children effectively.

As the committee report notes, the register is modelled closely on the successful Western Australian system, which has operated since 2012. Our committee travelled to Perth to study that system and meet with key agencies, including Western Australia Police Force, Legal Aid and the Commissioner for Children and Young People, to learn from their experience. We thank them for their time and excellent advice to our committee.

As noted in the committee report, in 2018 a statutory review of the operation and effectiveness of the Western Australian scheme was conducted by the Western Australia Police Force. The review made 12 findings and 10 recommendations. The primary finding was that the scheme met the purpose for which it was developed—to make information publicly available to the community. Interviews conducted as part of the review revealed a public perception that the scheme continued to be beneficial and remained an important tool in the protection of children and vulnerable people.

The Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee examined this bill in detail. We received 38 written submissions, held public briefings and hearings, and sought advice from experts across law enforcement, legal and community sectors. While some stakeholders, including the Queensland Law Society and the Queensland Human Rights Commission, raised concerns about privacy and human rights implications, even the Law Society acknowledged that elements of the bill, particularly the tier 3 parent disclosure mechanism, had merit in protecting children. The committee made one recommendation: that the bill be passed.

I want to remind the House that this is not the first time the idea of a public child sex offender register has come before us. In 2019, when the LNP was in opposition, we brought forward a motion calling for exactly this—a Queensland child sex offender register. It was debated in this very chamber on 27 March 2019. I remember that day clearly. I spoke passionately in favour of the motion because as a police officer, as a father and as a Queenslanders I knew then what we all know now, that sunlight is the best disinfectant and knowledge is power for parents. What happened during that debate? Labor members, including several sitting opposite today, spoke against and voted against the motion. The member for Bulimba, the child safety minister at the time, said, 'We are opposed to this motion because it will not work.' I ask those on the opposition benches today—they voted against this once—what they will do this time. Will they again deny parents the right to know or will they finally stand with Bruce and Denise Morcombe and with Queensland families and support this bill?

This law will not replace education, good parenting, vigilant communities or strong policing, but it will provide further protections. It gives parents tools to make informed decisions. It gives police new tools to act on noncompliance. It gives offenders and potential offenders a clear message: you are being held accountable. There are robust protections in place to prevent misuse. There are offences for harassment or unauthorised disclosure. There are safeguards for children of offenders and a statutory review to ensure the law remains effective and fair. The bill also provides an opportunity for education. The register will include community safety resources, advice for parents and links to the education materials reinforcing that prevention begins with awareness.

I note Labor members' contributions in relation to concerns around resourcing. With the extra 450 police we have managed to boost our numbers by in just 12 months, I do not hold those concerns. I have utmost confidence in our Queensland Police Service to be able to deliver this effectively.

Ms Bush: How many have left?

Mr HUNT: I will take that interjection: 'How many have left?' A lot less than under Labor. Attrition rates are going down. Police are being supported and we will continue to support them and increase the numbers.

Mrs Poole: We've got their back.

Mr HUNT: We've got their back—I take that interjection. As a former police officer, as the local member representing Daniel's home community and as chair of the committee that examined this bill, I could not be prouder to stand here today and support this bill. I pay tribute once again to Bruce and Denise Morcombe. You have turned unimaginable tragedy into unending hope. Through this law—Daniel's Law—your son's name will forever stand for the protection of children and families. To the

police who will administer this register: thank you for your professionalism. To the Queenslanders who have called for it for years: thank you for never giving up. To this parliament: let's do what we should have done long ago; let's pass Daniel's Law, because our children deserve nothing less.