




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (4.36 pm): I begin by acknowledging Bruce and Denise Morcombe. Their courage and tireless advocacy have transformed unimaginable personal tragedy into a powerful legacy of protection for Queensland's children. Through their determination, the name Daniel Morcombe has come to symbolise hope, vigilance and community action. Daniel's life, though cut tragically short, continues to inspire change and keeps other children safe. Few causes could ever carry greater moral weight than the wellbeing and protection of our children and few individuals have embodied that cause more fully than Bruce and Denise Morcombe. Today's legislation, the Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register (Daniel's Law) Bill 2025 represents a deeply meaningful milestone in that ongoing mission. It is not just another piece of law, it is a living tribute to Daniel's legacy and to the work of the Daniel Morcombe Foundation whose advocacy, education and awareness campaigns have reshaped child safety, not only across Queensland but also across Australia.

Each year, Day for Daniel unites more than two million Australians in a shared commitment to child protection, making it our nation's largest child safety awareness event. That reach and impact is extraordinary, but it also reflects something deeply personal—that is, the foundation's message has touched the hearts of families, teachers and children in every corner of our country. Their new documentary, *Don't Waste It—The Daniel Morcombe story*, released to mark the foundation's 20th anniversary, powerfully captures that journey, from the heartbreak of loss to the national leadership we see today in child protection and education. It is testament not only to Daniel's memory but also to the idea that awareness saves lives.

This bill, known as Daniel's Law, builds on that principle. Its purpose is simple but profound: to give parents and guardians more access to information that helps keep their children safe while ensuring that law enforcement remains in control of how that information is used. Under this bill, a three-tier register will be established. It allows for public access to certain information about reportable child sex offenders, particularly those who have breached their obligations, pose a risk to children or are missing or unaccounted for. Tier 1 will make public the details and photographs of offenders who are noncompliant or whose whereabouts are unknown; tier 2 will allow Queenslanders to conduct local area searches; and tier 3 will enable parents and guardians to seek confirmation about whether a person who has unsupervised contact with a child is a reportable offender.

The intent of the bill is clear: to empower parents, to strengthen transparency and, above all, to keep children safe. The Queensland Labor opposition supports that intent wholeheartedly. Protecting children must always transcend politics. When it comes to child safety, there can be no greater cause and no greater failure than inaction. However, to ensure Daniel's Law succeeds in both purpose and practice, it must be implemented with care, diligence and, most importantly, proper resourcing. This is not a set-and-forget reform. It is a complex, sensitive and demanding system that will only be effective

if the Queensland Police Service has the tools, staffing and support it needs to not just build the register but also maintain and monitor it safely over time.

The opposition calls on the government to ensure the QPS is properly funded for the ongoing operation of Daniel's Law. The current budget only funds the establishment phase, not the permanent staff required to administer and oversee the register once operational. That is not enough. We cannot expect existing police and civilian staff, already stretched by frontline demands, to absorb this new and complex workload. Experts suggest that the effective operation could require up to 100 full-time-equivalent positions, costing around \$17.5 million annually. That is a realistic investment for a law designed to protect Queensland's most vulnerable: our children. Without that commitment, we risk building a register that looks strong on paper but is weak in practice. We also risk undermining the very intent of Daniel's Law: to protect, not to promise without delivery.

It is also important to acknowledge the concerns raised by experts and stakeholders during the parliamentary committee process. These include the potential for a false sense of security among parents and guardians who access the register. The QPS itself has advised that only around 749 of Queensland's 3,240 registered reportable offenders—less than 25 per cent—will be captured under tier 2 of this scheme. That means many offenders will not appear on the public register. That fact must be made absolutely clear to the public. Education and transparency are vital. This register is an important tool, but it cannot be the only one.

We know that most offences against children are committed not by strangers but by people known to the victim, and those people may not appear on the register at all. That is why community education, awareness and prevention remain our most powerful weapons against abuse. The Daniel Morcombe Foundation has shown us that knowledge saves lives. It is education, not fear, that truly empowers parents and children, and any government-led awareness campaign around Daniel's Law must reflect that. It should be substantive, not superficial—grounded in safety and education, not political slogans.

We urge the government to conduct regular and transparent reviews during the early years of implementation. This will allow parliament to respond quickly to any unintended consequences such as the misuse of information, technical failures or the risk of vigilantism. The legislation rightly includes strong penalties for those who attempt to misuse or weaponise information from the register, including up to 10 years imprisonment for intimidation or harassment. Those safeguards are essential and they must be enforced with the same vigilance that we are applying to protect victims. This parliament honours Daniel's memory today, not through words alone but through lasting action. I support the bill.