




Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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

Second Reading

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (8.15 pm): I rise in strong support of Daniel's Law. For too long, parents have felt like they were being kept in the dark about the people living in their own communities. Daniel's Law will change that. It will give Queensland families access to information they have never had before. As Minister for Youth, I see every day how much trust we place in our communities to help raise, guide and protect our young people. That trust depends on safety. It depends on having the confidence that the people around children are accountable and that our systems work together to do everything possible to prevent harm before it happens.

Daniel's Law strengthens Queensland's safety net. It means parents, carers and young people themselves will be better protected. It gives families access to vital information about convicted child sex offenders, not to perpetuate fear or enable vengeance but for vigilance and prevention. This legislation represents what we were elected to do: act with common sense, deliver on our promises and give Queenslanders confidence that the system is on their side.

The Crisafulli government made a clear commitment to restore safety in every corner of our state—in the places people live, learn and grow. Whether it is keeping our streets safe, our homes secure or our kids protected, our government is focused on outcomes that make this state a safer place to live. Daniel's Law will do exactly that. It builds on proven models—South Australia and particularly Western Australia's three-tier disclosure system—and adapts them to work in the Queensland context. The three tiers strike the right balance between community protection and individual accountability: a public register for offenders who have breached their obligations and cannot be located; local access for residents to check offenders living in their area; and a parent-specific safeguard allowing families to confirm whether someone with unsupervised contact with their child is a registered offender.

Under all tiers, it is up to the Police Commissioner to ultimately decide whether to publish or disclose information. This is because there could be circumstances, other than the stated exclusions, where it is inappropriate to do so. To determine an offender's eligibility to be published or released under tier 1 and tier 2, the Police Commissioner may consider any matters considered relevant. This could include: potential impacts on the victim where known, including the likelihood of identification and retraumatisation; the risk of interference with the offender's compliance with orders and obligations, or an offender's management generally; or whether publication is in the public interest and in line with the intention of the disclosure scheme. Again, in all instances the Police Commissioner will decide whether to release information to a person via tier 2 or tier 3.

This is a system designed to empower, not to alarm. It gives parents the tools they need to protect their children, while also setting clear boundaries against misuse with strict penalties if this occurs. These strong penalties for anyone who tries to harass or intimidate offenders remind everyone that this is about protection, not punishment. For many families, this law will mean peace of mind. For others, it could mean preventing a tragedy occurring.

None of this would have happened without courage and persistence, and tonight's bill honours the impact of two extraordinary Queenslanders: Bruce and Denise Morcombe. They are two people who would wish with all their hearts that they were not household names. For more than two decades they have turned unthinkable grief into extraordinary advocacy. They have worked tirelessly to make Queensland children safer, to educate young people about their own rights and to help parents and teachers have those difficult but necessary conversations. Daniel's Law is a tribute to their strength, their love and their belief that good can and must come out of tragedy.

I have seen that same strength from a couple whom I represent—that is, Brett and Belinda Beasley. In fact, the Daniel Morcombe Foundation was the tragic inspiration for the Jack Beasley Foundation. Brett looked to it in particular as the model for what they wanted to achieve in the area of knife crime and youth violence prevention. In many ways Brett and Belinda have walked in the footsteps of Bruce and Denise to do all they possibly can to make sure no other family goes through what they have been through. Just as Jack's Law has been expanded and made permanent by this government, so too will Daniel's Law go a long way towards protecting young Queenslanders.

As the Minister for Youth, I want to speak directly to what this will mean for young Queenslanders. Every child deserves to grow up safe. They should be able to walk to school, play sport and take part in their community without living in fear. Safety is the foundation of opportunity. Without it, young people cannot learn, thrive or go anywhere near reaching their potential. That is why the Crisafulli government's focus on community safety goes hand in hand with our work to give young Queenslanders brighter futures through housing, mental health support, jobs, training and education. Protecting young people is not just about responding to danger; it is about building communities where those young people can belong and succeed. Daniel's Law will sit proudly alongside those broader efforts.

To conclude, this bill delivers on our promise to the people of Queensland. It delivers on a commitment to parents, who want to know their children are safe. It delivers on the legacy of a young boy whose tragic loss changed this state forever. I congratulate the police minister for his leadership in bringing this bill to the House and the member for Nicklin not only for his work with the Queensland Police Service and the Morcombe family but also for doing a fine job chairing this committee. Thank you to Bruce and Denise Morcombe for their unwavering strength. I commend this bill to the House, because nothing matters more than keeping Queensland kids safe.