




Speech By
Hon. Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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

Second Reading

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (8.31 pm): I stand tonight to speak on the Community Protection and Public Child Sex Offender Register (Daniel's Law) Bill 2025, otherwise known as Daniel's Law. I firmly believe that a government's No. 1 priority is to ensure the safety of its citizens. That is something that this government has endeavoured to do from the time we were elected. It is what we promised in our election campaign. It is what we are striving to deliver through changing laws, changing regulations and changing policies, to ensure that, firstly, we protect our citizens and that, secondly, we punish those and have deterrents for perpetrators and those who constantly break the law.

Our No. 1 goal is to protect our citizens, but part of that is to ensure that we protect our most vulnerable people. A whole range of people fall into that category. There are those who have mental health issues. There are those who have other disabilities physical and mental. The other cohort of people I put into that category are our children. You do not have to have children to understand and have empathy and support for their protection, but when you do have children—and I have four children who are now in their 30s and I have now gone to the next stage where I have seven grandchildren—and you have those personal experiences your perspective on life changes a lot with regard to how they should be protected and how they should be able to live their lives peacefully.

I do not know about other members but occasionally there will be an article in the paper that talks about some horrific crime against children and I simply cannot read it. I read the first paragraph and think, 'I don't want to read that anymore.' I have empathy for those who work in the sector and experience this every day, whether they are police officers, child protection officers or child protection ministers. These people deal with this every day, and I honestly do not know how they cope with it. It is very important that we do whatever we can to protect our children. That is at the very heart of this bill.

There are evil people in this world—evil people who want to take advantage of our children and who position themselves to get exposure and access to children, whether it is in schools, in churches, in youth groups, in scout groups, in sporting organisations. They do not discriminate against any organisation. If those organisations give them an opportunity to be with children, these people will find themselves there. Again, it is very important that we have policies in place—which this government is endeavouring to do. Whether it is a childcare centre, a sporting organisation, mandatory reporting or whatever it may be, it is important that we have a spectrum of policies that help us provide protection for our most vulnerable people—and that is our children.

The other side of this from our government's perspective is that we are not about the rights of perpetrators; we are about the rights of victims and the people who have suffered the consequences of criminal acts. We have constantly shown that in the way we have brought legislation into this House. This is simply another step in that direction. This child sex offender register is something we have campaigned for for years—years. We brought a motion before the House I think it was in 2019.

Mr Hunt: March, 27th.

Mr MANDER: Is that when it was? Thank you. I will come back to that. The point I want to make is that this is not something we have suddenly caught on to. We have campaigned on this issue for years. That is why it gladdens my heart that we are in a position in government to bring this to fruition.

Of course the Morcombe family have been mentioned many times—the people who have been responsible for this and who have driven this. They are the most beautiful family you could ever come across. They are people who have paid the ultimate price but who want to make sure that their pain and suffering is not for nothing. That is why it is so comforting to know that this particular legislation has been named Daniel's Law, because they deserve that.

I firmly believe that parents have a right to know and to be informed about the location of child sex offenders. People will come out and say that we are infringing on people's human rights. Again, I go back to the principle that has driven us: we are concerned about the human rights of victims. Tell you truth, I don't give a stuff about the rights of people who commit these horrendous crimes. In fact, they deserve to suffer. They have sacrificed their rights that they believe they have and that other do-gooders believe they have as well. If you commit these types of crimes, I am sorry but your rights go out the window—and this is one example of that.

For too long we have dillydallied around these types of issues, but there needs to be consequences for actions. The ultimate consequence in this case is that their names will be made public, their location will be made public and parents will be able to access information about people their kids come into contact with to find out whether it is safe for their children to do so.

This is a well-thought-out scheme. It is an additional tool for parents. It is a three-tier system. I will not go through the process because many of my colleagues, as well as the minister, have already mentioned it. It is based on precedents around the country, with WA and SA having registers. We have built on those models and broadened the remit so that it can be even more effective.

Of course it is important that we have safeguards against vigilantes, and they have been put in place. That is appropriate. We cannot have people taking the law into their own hands. They do not have to if we do this. We are providing a framework for the protection of children. Nobody needs to go and chase these people. It is great to see that there are laws that will prevent that from happening.

The other thing that is very telling about this is that I am pretty confident there will probably be 51 or 52 speakers from this side of the House speaking about this bill. Why is that? Because it is in our DNA. It is in our DNA that the rule of law should apply, that there should be consequences for actions and that our most vulnerable should be protected. For us, this debate in some ways is a great celebration of the campaign that we have gone through for the last six, seven or eight years. That is why every person on this side of the House will speak on it.

I am not sure it is the same on the other side of the House. There are people tonight who will vote for this because they know they have no choice, but I tell you it is not in their DNA. Their DNA is to find some excuse for people who are the scum of the earth and to protect their rights. It is very telling that the leadership of the opposing party—I will take that signal from the member for Nicklin—is zip; there is nothing. Let's not forget the motion we talked about earlier that members of the government of the day voted against. The member for Morayfield said there was an unnecessary risk. Two senior ministers—

Ms Grace: It was a motion.

Mr MANDER: A motion, exactly right, that you voted against. The member for Morayfield, the member for Nudgee—

(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member for Everton, your time has expired, but before you resume your seat I would ask you to withdraw some of the unparliamentary remarks you made.

Mr MANDER: I withdraw.