

Question on Notice
No. 488
Asked on 23 March 2010

MR MESSENGER asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS)—

QUESTION:

With reference to a letter and recorded transcripts I sent last week to him, the Police Commissioner and the Premier, outlining concerns and allegations from senior members of the Burnett/Bundaberg Indigenous community regarding paedophilia and police inaction regarding those allegations—

- (1) Has the Minister had discussions with the Police Commissioner and Premier regarding these allegations?
- (2) Will the Minister detail the number of known and convicted paedophiles, dangerous sex offenders and/or repeat child rapists who have been allowed to relocate to the Burnett/Bundaberg region from other states and regions of Queensland (reported separately for the last five years)?

ANSWER:

There are strong laws in place in Queensland under which those who commit crimes against children can be charged and prosecuted.

The Queensland Police Service is committed to investigating all reports relating to abuse against children and appropriate action will be taken, including prosecution if applicable where sufficient evidence exists.

As outlined in my response of 19 April 2010 to the Member, this matter has been referred to the Queensland Police Service and is currently under investigation by the Bundaberg Police District Child Protection Investigation Unit.

Queensland is at the forefront of the Australian National Child Offender Register (ANCOR) scheme to monitor the whereabouts and activities of convicted paedophiles. The *Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004* gives police the power to monitor child sex offenders for the protection of children in this state. The aim of the register is to reduce the likelihood that convicted child sex offenders will re-offend.

The Commissioner of Police has responsibility for the maintenance of the Queensland Child Protection Register established under the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004*. The Act provides that personal information recorded in the register, including the location of a Reportable Offender, can only be disclosed in circumstances approved by the Commissioner.

I am advised it would not be appropriate to publicly disclose, even by region, the locations of these offenders. The Commissioner has determined that to do so would not be in the interest of the proper management of Reportable Offenders in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

The purpose of the Act is to require particular offenders who commit sexual, or other serious offences against children to keep police informed of their whereabouts and other personal details for a period of time after their release into the community to reduce the likelihood of re-offending, and to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of any further offences they may commit.

To assist monitoring by police, the Australian National Child Offender Register records the personal details of reportable offenders including a comprehensive physical description and their residential addresses, motor vehicles, contact with children, employment and interstate and overseas travel movements.

The Queensland Police Service has developed a range of strategies to ensure reportable offenders comply with their reporting obligations. These strategies, which are referred to generally as 'compliance management', provide for a graduated allocation of policing resources targeting those offenders at risk of re-offending and who pose the greatest risk to children.

Police districts across Queensland have the responsibility for monitoring reportable offenders within their respective areas by delivering a tailored response to best meet the needs of local communities. Every reportable offender within a police district has, at a minimum, one experienced police officer designated to monitor reporting compliance and to investigate and prosecute offences.

The Child Protection Offender Registry within the State Crime Operations Command coordinates the state-wide management of the Australian National Child Offender Register and provides expert intelligence and operational support to regional police. The Registry has established extensive networks within Queensland, the Australian Federal Police and all interstate jurisdictions to facilitate the efficient operation of the Australian National Child Offender Register.

The success of the Queensland Police Service reportable offender compliance management model and policing response to other serious sex offenders is predicated upon the non-disclosure of offender personal information to encourage a higher level of engagement with police.

The Queensland community can have confidence the Queensland Police Service is using its information and intelligence systems appropriately and effectively to enhance community safety.