

Question on Notice
No. 820
Asked on 25 May 2011

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

QUESTION:

Arising from the cognate debate on sex offender reporting bills on 6 April 2011, will the Minister advise how many paedophiles and other sex offenders' details have been published under the Police Commissioner's authority during the last 12 months?

ANSWER:

Children are the most vulnerable members of the community and, as such, need the highest possible level of protection. The new child sex offender laws passed by State Parliament in April will result in stricter reporting requirements and tougher penalties for offenders who fail to comply with their reporting obligations.

Queensland's sex offender laws were already among the toughest in Australia. This legislation makes our laws even tougher, further enhancing the safety of children and the wider community.

Under the new laws, failure to advise police of changes to personal details, or giving false and misleading information, will now attract a maximum penalty of five years' jail or a \$30,000 fine, up from two years or \$15,000.

Additionally, the new laws expand the list of matters offenders now need to report to police including all telecommunication services (telephones, internet services, email addresses) and passport details. Reporting timeframes have also been substantially reduced.

Police are also able to take DNA samples from reportable offenders in certain circumstances, while the range of offences that require automatic listing on the Child Sex Offender Register has been expanded.

These laws enhance the ability of police to monitor offenders in the community and enable police to intervene at a much earlier stage in situations where children may be exposed to risk.

Queensland is at the forefront of the national register scheme to monitor the whereabouts and activities of convicted paedophiles. The Bligh Government makes no apology for being tough on child sex offenders.

Within the preceding 12 months, there have been no requirements to make public disclosures about the personal details of any paedophiles and other sex offenders who are registered under the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004* in Queensland by the Commissioner of Police.

In instances where a child or children have been deemed to be at risk, targeted disclosure of information to individuals or government agencies occurs as per legislative mechanisms. The following are common examples to whom and when the disclosure of personal information is permitted by the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004*.

- *Australian Federal Police* – Upon receiving a report of a reportable offender's intention to travel overseas, the Police Commissioner must ensure that a copy of the report is given to the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police.
- *Supervising Authorities* – When an offender stops being in government custody and upon request to provide specific information to police, the release of personal information by police from the register to the relevant Supervising Authority occurs.
- *Child Protection Investigations* – The disclosure of information to enable the functions and enforcement of the *Child Protection Act 1999*; or to prevent a child being exposed to an increased risk of harm.
- *Interstate Registrars* – The disclosure of personal information to a corresponding registrar advising of an offender's interstate travel movements.

The Queensland community can have confidence that the Queensland Government and the Queensland Police Service are using and sharing information about paedophiles and other sex offenders appropriately and effectively in the interests of keeping our children and the community safe.

As at 1 June 2011, there were no registered persons on the Queensland *Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004*, register with 'whereabouts' unknown status.