

# The establishment of a public sex offender register under ‘Daniel’s Law’

**PeakCare’s Submission to the Queensland Police Service**

28 July 2025

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## Introduction

PeakCare Queensland Incorporated (PeakCare) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Queensland Police Service (QPS) proposal to implement a public sex offender register under “Daniel’s Law.” As a peak body committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, we believe any legislative or policy response to child sexual abuse must be evidence-based, proportionate, and directed at effective prevention.

Daniel’s Law proposes a three-tiered public sex offender register that aims to improve community safety through increased public awareness and access to offender information. We support the intent of this proposal and we recommend a continuous review of the effectiveness alongside a strong focus on community education, prevention and early intervention.

## About Peakcare

PeakCare is a not-for-profit peak body for child and family services in Queensland, providing an independent voice representing and promoting matters of interest to the non-government sector. Across Queensland, PeakCare represents small, medium, and large local, state-wide and national non-government organisations which provide prevention and early intervention, generic, targeted, and intensive family support to children, young people, families, and communities. Member organisations also provide child protection services, foster care, kinship care and residential care for children and young people who are at risk of entry to, or who are in the statutory child protection system and youth justice systems.

A large network of associate members and supporters also subscribe to PeakCare. This includes individuals with an interest in child protection, youth justice and related services, and who are supportive of PeakCare’s policy platform around the rights and entitlements of children, young people and their families to safety, wellbeing, and equitable access to life opportunities.

## Peakcare’s Submission

### Action-Based Research is Required to Determine Effectiveness

PeakCare recommends the scheme is implemented alongside action-based research from the outset, in order to continuously evaluate its effectiveness, adapt to emerging issues, and ensure that it meets the intended community protection and transparency objectives.

Megan’s Law, enacted in the United States in 1996, mandates public access to sex offender registries. After nearly 30 years of operation, the evidence shows little to no reduction in sexual reoffending or child abuse rates attributable to public registry access. The Australian Institute of Criminology concluded that

public registers offer at best a modest deterrent to first-time offenders but no proven impact on reoffending.<sup>1 2 3 4</sup>

States such as New South Wales, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory use police-only sex offender registers. These systems are backed by robust evaluations showing that restricted access registers support effective law enforcement oversight, promote compliance monitoring and do not disrupt offender reintegration or increase stigma. Research indicates that these systems balance public safety with offender rehabilitation and community stability.<sup>5</sup>

The evaluation Western Australia's three-tiered model, on which Daniel's Law is based, found that the Scheme in operation has met its identified purpose as a tool to make information available to the community, however, a number of recommendations were made to enhance the scheme to make it a more effective community safety scheme. As a peak body invested in the safety of children, PeakCare is particularly interested in the scheme enhancing community safety.<sup>6</sup>

We therefore believe the ongoing monitoring and reporting of the scheme's effectiveness should occur, with ongoing adaptation of the model in order to ensure the safety of children is the highest priority and that this outcome is being achieved.

## The Role of Preventative Education

Preventative education plays a critical role in safeguarding children and supporting families and communities to identify, prevent, and respond to risks of harm. Advocates such as Hetty Johnston AM have long called for a more structured and comprehensive approach to community education around child protection,<sup>7</sup> a position we strongly support.

Government resources should be strategically directed toward public education initiatives, including in schools, that inform children, parents, and carers about safety, boundaries, and protective behaviours. These initiatives should not only raise awareness but also empower individuals with practical tools to recognise and report harmful behaviour.

Strengthening frontline services and enhancing inter-agency collaboration between police, schools, child protection agencies, and healthcare providers ensures that risk factors are identified early and

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Criminology (2018). *What impact do public sex offender registries have on community safety?* AIC Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice No. 548.

<sup>2</sup> Levenson, J. S., D'Amora, D. A. & Hern, A. L. (2007). Megan's Law and its Impact on Community Re-entry for Sex Offenders. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 25(4), pp. 587–602.

<sup>3</sup> Zgoba, K. M. & Mitchell, M. M. (2021). A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of sex offender registration policies. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 32(2), pp. 129–152.

<sup>4</sup> Veysey, B., Zgoba, K. & Dalessandro, M. (2009). *Megan's Law: Assessing the Practical and Monetary Efficacy*. New Jersey State Police.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Institute of Criminology (2018). *What impact do public sex offender registries have on community safety?* AIC Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice No. 548.

<sup>6</sup> Western Australia Police Force. (2018). *Review of the operation and effectiveness of the public notification scheme established by Part 5A Community Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004*. Government of Western Australia.

<sup>7</sup> Courier Mail (2020). Legal experts, criminologists warn of dangers of child sex offender register. <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/state-election/legal-experts-criminologists-warn-of-dangers-of-child-sex-offender-register/news-story/5c36f22180f53604a4c58e909a519ff2>

addressed holistically. Coordinated education and support networks build community resilience and reinforce shared responsibility for child safety.

Importantly, information and resources on keeping children safe must be equitable and accessible. This includes providing materials in multiple formats and languages to reflect Queensland's cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as ensuring access for people with disabilities through audio resources, Easy Read materials, Auslan, and face-to-face outreach where appropriate. We recommend the Queensland Police Service partners with disability peak bodies to develop and share these resources. Traditional online methods, while useful, must be complemented by community-based engagement strategies to ensure that no one is left behind.

A sustained, inclusive, and well-resourced education strategy is essential in fostering a protective environment for all children across Queensland.

## Conclusion

PeakCare recognises the importance of empowering families to protect their children. The implementation of Daniel's Law in Queensland must be accompanied by the ongoing development of its evidence base. We urge the Queensland Police Service and government decision-makers to continue to place prevention, education, and evidence-based intervention at the centre of Queensland's child protection strategy.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. We trust that the information and perspectives provided will be of assistance in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,



**Mr Tom Allsop**  
Chief Executive Officer