




Speech By  
**Mark Boothman**

**MEMBER FOR THEODORE**

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## **CHILD PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING AND OFFENDER PROHIBITION ORDER) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (6.41 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I would like to follow some of the comments of previous speakers on this side of the chamber about the lack of consultation when it comes to the amendments which were tabled about 17 minutes before the bill was debated—I repeat, 17 minutes. These amendments are greater than the bill in its entirety. We are looking at 48 pages of legislation, and there are 57 pages of amendments.

In this parliament we have one legislative chamber, so we rely heavily on our committee system to scrutinise legislation and get community feedback about legislation. I notice that there were a fair few submitters to the original bill itself, including institutions like the Queensland Law Society. They always like to put their point of view on very important legislation. They did not get an opportunity to talk about the amendments which were tabled 17 minutes before debate on this legislation began.

**Mrs Gerber:** Amendments that decriminalise offences.

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** I take that interjection from the member for Currumbin. These amendments have far-reaching consequences and they need to be scrutinised. We have one chamber in this parliament. We do not have a Legislative Council like other parliaments in Australia. We rely on our committee system to be robust, and if that committee system is circumvented by government members in this parliament then it turns the whole system into a sham.

I am very passionate when it comes to child safety and child protection. I always have been. I have two beautiful daughters and one beautiful son. Like all members in this chamber, we want to make sure that the laws in place are the toughest and strongest they can be. As I said, we rely on our committee system to act as a check and balance to ensure that the laws we debate in this place are the best they can be. What we see here tonight is an absolute failure in the Westminster system and a failure of democracy in this state. These laws should be put before a committee and discussed by submitters and interested parties throughout this state to make sure there are no unintended consequences.

I am absolutely furious. I share the anger of the member for Maiwar about this. It is just ridiculous that we are in this chamber debating literally a whole new bill. The opposition members and the crossbench members have not had any time whatsoever to properly scrutinise this and to allow community groups to properly scrutinise this.

In all honesty, I am not upset about some of the amendments that have been put forward, such as those to do with ever-changing technology with MAC addresses—that is, media access control addresses. I understand where the police are coming from in that respect, but it would be better if we could properly scrutinise it through a committee process. We set up the committee process because we do not have an upper house: we do not have a Legislative Council.

**Mrs Gerber:** They are in too much of a state of chaos to be able to do it properly.

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** I also take that interjection. We are in a state of chaos in this parliament. It is like we are literally chasing after—

**Mr Watts:** We are not; Labor are.

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** Labor is literally chasing after issues which are continuously happening out in the community.

I would like to discuss the point about VPNs and changing technology. Technology is continuously changing. You can easily change a MAC address through software, and I understand where the amendments are coming from with that. In terms of child safety in our schools, I was on a committee a few years ago—and the member for Townsville was the committee chair—and the inquiry discussed sexting and the transmission of images over mobile devices, such as mobile phones. When we found out how common that was, it was truly horrifying. If parents knew how common that was, they would be truly shocked. So, yes, those parts of the legislation do actually have merit, but what are the potential unintended consequences of these changes? That is why this system needs to be properly scrutinised. We need the submitter groups to properly look at the legislation to ensure we get it right. Giving us 17 minutes to go over something which for all intents and purposes is a whole new bill is completely unacceptable and is a slap in the face of the residents—

**Mr Watts:** And democracy.

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** And democracy. We were elected in this place to scrutinise this type of legislation. As I said, I am very passionate when it comes to child safety. I want my family to be as secure as possible when it comes to these online predators—and I am sure every other member in this place feels the same—but we need to make sure we get the legislation right in the first place. We seem to always be coming into this chamber and facing all of these amendments because something has gone wrong with an amendment at the last minute, and then we have to change it again and change it again and change it again.

This reminds me of groundhog day. We are going back over and over issues when we need to ensure that the committee system holds proper consultation with the community and with people like the Queensland Law Society and all these different submitters.

As the member for Currumbin pointed out earlier, in the amendments which were tabled, there is only half a page of consultation. That is absolutely ridiculous. This is really important legislation. It is disgraceful that we are debating something with so little time to properly scrutinise it and properly read over it. It is like we are covering this up. The problem is we are continuously seeing a government in chaos and in crisis, and this is not in the best interests of Queenslanders and certainly not in the best interests of child protection.