



**ROB MESSENGER MP – MEMBER FOR BURNETT  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR POLICE & CORRECTIVE SERVICES**

# Your Messenger

August 2007

## Dangerous sex offenders...where are they?

There has been much community concern raised in recent times over child sex offenders living close to families with young children and near schools.

Rob Messenger, in his capacity as the Shadow Police and Corrective Services Minister, has proposed a 'dangerous sex offender' register that would list suburbs and towns where offenders are living.

Mr Messenger has been overwhelmed with support for his plan which is based on reporting systems in Britain and particularly the US, where under 'Megan's Law', information is publicly available on sex predators, including on the internet. Mr Messenger said the Police Minister told Parliament recently that at the end of April there were 2379 people on the State's child protection register, with 24 'dangerous sex offenders' either in jail or having been released into the community.

"Queenslanders should consider a version of 'Megan's Law' that provides a public website listing suburbs and towns where sex offenders are living. The site would list the crimes committed by the offenders, but not their identities or their addresses," Mr Messenger said.

Mr Messenger is concerned that the Minister admitted in Parliament that 47 sex offenders "had slipped through a loophole" because they were not served notices within 28 days and had not been legally required to report to Police. "Police Minister Spence has undertaken to provide details on how many of the 24 classified dangerous sex offenders were in jail or released back into the community, but I believe we need to provide better information to the public on these offenders," he said.

"The Beattie government seems more concerned about protecting the privacy of sexual predators than the safety of children and the victims of sex attacks. The Beattie government maintains a high level of secrecy over the location of sex offenders, claiming any other policy would drive sex offenders underground. But my position is public

interest needs to be balanced with the rights of offenders. The Minister has a responsibility to children and mums and dads, not just prisoners," Mr Messenger said.

A report released recently reveals that the Beattie Labor Government's slapped together dangerous sex offender laws are not working. The Criminology Research Council report, "Preventative Detention for 'Dangerous' Offenders in Australia: A Critical Analysis and Proposals for Policy Development", indicates a new approach is needed to effectively manage sex offenders both in prison and if and when they are released.

The report, by respected Monash University academics, criticises the practice of leaving it until the end of an offender's sentence before the Attorney-General applies to the Supreme Court for a dangerous sex offender order and suggests the order should instead be made at the start of an offender's sentence. Furthermore, the report casts doubt over the value of sex offender rehabilitation programs in the current form and questions the effectiveness of group based therapies, with the researchers calling for Government resources to be focussed on case based, individualised treatment programs.

The report also criticises the Queensland Government over the "lack of co-ordination" between agencies on treatment and management of dangerous sex offenders (p 89). It points to a single body being established to manage and support dangerous sex offenders and highlights a model used in Scotland where a 'Risk Management Authority' develops policy, carries out research, co-ordinates the management of individual offenders and handles risk assessment accreditation.

The report should provide food for thought for the Beattie Labor Government who plans to release at least 100 paedophiles over the next three years and recently changed the law to allow public servants to overrule Supreme Court orders on these dangerous criminals.

Protecting the public from dangerous sex offenders should be one of the highest priorities for the State Government. This Government needs to carefully consider the comments made by independent researchers in this report.

## Burnett's public dental health crisis continues

Rob Messenger is continuing his fight for a better public dental health service in the Bundaberg-Burnett region, having launched a petition in May this year, calling on the Queensland Government to urgently provide more funding and resources for better dental treatment in our region.

Mr Messenger wishes to remind all Bundaberg and Burnett residents to sign the petition to send a message to the Beattie Labor Government about its failure to provide our region with adequate dental health treatment. "The inadequate dental health care is

resulting in unacceptably long waiting lists and waiting times of more than 7 years," Mr Messenger said.

"The Petition request that the Queensland Government recognises the long suffering of oral health patients and urgently provides additional funding and resources to cut down our lengthy waiting lists. Additionally the petition calls on the Queensland Government to enter into contracts with private dental health practitioners, should there be a lack of public dentists, to perform the necessary procedures in order to reduce waiting lists and times to a just and manageable

level," he said.

By signing the petition, you will be helping to put pressure on the State Government to ensure that the Bundaberg-Burnett receives a far superior public dental health service which we deserve.

To sign the paper petition, drop in to the Burnett, Bundaberg or Hinkler Electorate Offices.



## Beattie punishes Bundaberg-Burnett

### Rob's Message:

To say the least, I was shocked and profoundly disappointed when I examined this year's Wide Bay-Burnett budget and discovered that the Premier has not kept his election promise of providing 30 new beds for our Bundaberg Base Hospital. It is ironic that because of the disaster that occurred at the Bundaberg Base Hospital, health services all over Queensland have seen a 12 per cent increase but Bundaberg and the Burnett have hardly seen a cracker of that money. There will not be one extra bed available at the Bundaberg Base Hospital!

This budget shows that Peter Beattie has clearly forgotten and does not care about what happened at our hospital. He has forgotten and does not care about the 87 deaths and the 2,000 people who were illegally dealt with by Queensland Health – that is, ex-Patel patients. He has forgotten and does not care that our children will still be mixed with adults in the paediatrics ward. This is incredible and shows just how desperate the hospital is for beds by mixing children with adults.

Excluding the mental health in-patient beds, Bundaberg Hospital has only 120 beds for surgical, medical, paediatrics et cetera to service a population of 120,000, amounting to just one public hospital bed available for every 1,000 people. The people of Bundaberg and Burnett deserve better. Our community deserves the best public hospital system in Australia, yet Peter Beattie keeps on punishing us for revealing the truth about just how badly he and his government ran down our public health system.

## Mandatory jail terms for assaults on police

The Queensland Coalition is gravely concerned with the faltering level of respect for police officers and the subsequent alarmingly high number of assaults that are occurring on our police officers. The Queensland Coalition believes we need to take action to strongly reinforce the concept that an assault on a law enforcement officer in the course of their duty is an extremely serious matter that would bring swift and severe consequences. Therefore, we are proposing to strengthen laws and introduce mandatory jail sentences imposed on anyone assaulting a Queensland police officer.

This initiative has been refuted by the Police Minister, Hon Judy Spence MP, despite her

own figures revealing that nearly 170 police officers are attacked every month, an average which has existed for the past 18 months. Instead, the Minister continues to make excuses for offenders, stating: *"In most cases, assaults on police officers happen in the heat of the moment"* and *"Offenders do not necessarily consider the consequences when they act in this abhorrent manner"*.

Rob Messenger is seeking your opinion in relation to the Queensland Coalition's proposal of introducing mandatory jail sentences for those who assault police officers in the course of their duty. Your

feedback will enable the Queensland Coalition to fine-tune our proposal to ensure it is in line with the community's requirements.

If you would like to comment on this proposal please feel free to contact the Burnett Electorate Office on 4159 1988 or email [burnett@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:burnett@parliament.qld.gov.au) or send any written correspondence to PO Box 8371, Bargara Q 4670.

Alternatively, you can register your support or otherwise on Rob's website : [www.robmessenger.com](http://www.robmessenger.com)

### Parliamentary Activity Update:

This year alone, Rob has made 27 speeches so far in State Parliament (at time of print).

Some of the topics discussed recently include:

- Police Crisis (Beattie Govt. mismanagement)
- Community Ambulance Cover
- Council amalgamation
- Industrial Relations laws
- Primary Industries Acts (Affecting Sugar Industry)
- Organised crime gangs
- Bundaberg/Burnett public health system (resourcing)
- Police powers
- Dangerous sex offenders

\* Total number of speeches since being elected to the seat of Burnett in the year 2004 is 186 (at time of print)

To view any of Rob's speeches, visit:

<http://www.robmessenger.com>

## Burnett's Youth Member of Parliament

Budding Politician Bryce Nicol (pictured with Rob) recently stopped in to get some advice from Rob. Bryce is Burnett's Youth Member of Parliament for 2007.

Run by the YMCA, the Youth Parliament is an opportunity for young people just like Bryce to represent their respective electorates throughout Queensland. It is a unique forum which allows young people to act as a Member of Parliament and discuss issues affecting young people in their communities.

Congratulations Bryce on your appointment as Burnett's 2007 Youth Member!



### ROB MESSENGER—MEMBER FOR BURNETT—CONTACT DETAILS

Shop 7 Bargara Beach Plaza  
15-19 See Street  
Bargara

PO Box 8371  
BARGARA QLD 4670

Ph: 4159 1988  
Fax: 4159 2696

Email: [burnett@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:burnett@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Website: [www.robmessenger.com](http://www.robmessenger.com)