



Hon Neil Roberts MP
Member for Nudgee



**Queensland
Government**

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**Minister for Police, Corrective Services
and Emergency Services**

24 JUN 2010

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 19 May 2010, addressed to the Honourable Cameron Dick MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations regarding Petition No. 1345-10. This petition calls on the Government to require all sex offenders sentenced to a term of imprisonment to complete a rehabilitation program before being released back into the community.

The Queensland Government is committed to community safety by ensuring rehabilitation programs are offered to all incarcerated sexual offenders who have a sufficient custodial period of imprisonment to participate. Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) sexual offending programs are based on best practice research in the therapeutic rehabilitation of sex offenders. A system of State-wide, centralised allocation to specialised assessment and rehabilitation exists to ensure that equitable placement is afforded to all incarcerated sex offenders. Limitations exist where offenders either maintain their innocence for their sexual crimes or otherwise refuse to engage in rehabilitation programs.

The Commissioner, QCS has advised there is a significant investment in the reintegration support of offenders, through the critical period of transition from custody to the community. All sex offenders are eligible to participate in a transitions release preparation program and may also be referred to a contracted non-government organisation to provide pre and post release support to address any outstanding reintegration needs.

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The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring the safety of the Queensland community and takes the issue of sexual offending very seriously. In addition to increasing the maximum penalties for sex offences and excluding the principle of imprisonment as a last resort when sentencing convicted sexual offenders, the Queensland Government, in response to community concern about the risks posed by the release of sex offenders, developed legislation which provides for their continued detention and/or supervision at the expiry of their sentence of imprisonment.

Queensland's *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* (DPSOA) plays a critical role in ensuring the protection of the community and preventing further victims. The legislation was introduced to specifically manage sex offenders who were deemed to pose a risk to the community at the completion of their sentence. The DPSOA is underpinned by a detailed decision making framework to identify those sex offenders who pose an unacceptable risk to the community. Those offenders are then referred to the Attorney-General for consideration for a DPSOA order.

The Attorney-General can then apply to the Supreme Court of Queensland for a DPSOA order. The Court may make the order where it is satisfied that there is an unacceptable risk that the offender will commit a serious sexual offence. An offender's participation in any sexual offending program or other rehabilitation program, and any positive effect it may have had on the offender, are matters which the Supreme Court must have regard to when determining whether to make a DPSOA order.

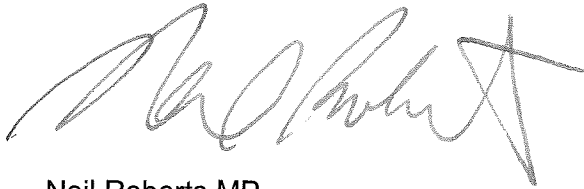
The DPSOA allows the Supreme Court to order an offender to be held in custody beyond the offender's sentence end date for continuing control, care or treatment. Alternatively, the Supreme Court may determine that the adequate protection of the community can be assured by the offender's release under supervision, in which case the court will impose a strict regime of order conditions.

National and international research and experience shows tough supervision and monitoring of sex offenders plays a significant part in reducing re-offending. It means that there are fewer victims in the future. Offenders managed under this legislation within the community are required to engage in individual intervention to address their sexual offending.

Finally, any decisions to release sexual offenders from secure custody to parole are made with paramount consideration of community safety. The parole boards are independent statutory bodies; legislation provides that decisions relating to parole can only be made by the relevant parole board, and as such, anyone external to the boards cannot intervene in a parole matter.

Should you require further information, please contact Ms Corinne Mulholland, Senior Policy Advisor, on telephone number (07) 3239 0199.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Roberts', with a large, stylized star-like flourish at the end.

Neil Roberts MP
**Minister for Police, Corrective Services
and Emergency Services**