Public sex offender website to protect Territory families

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The Northern Territory will be the first jurisdiction in the country to introduce a publicly accessible website featuring details and locations of convicted serious sex offenders.

The Northern Territory Sex Offender Public Website (NTSOPW) legislation will be named ‘Daniel’s Law’ in memory of child sex offender victim Daniel Morcombe.

“The website will include an image, physical description and regional whereabouts of convicted serious sex offenders in the Northern Territory,” Attorney-General John Elferink announced today.

“This initiative will allow individuals and families to familiarise themselves with important details and be more vigilant about named serious sex offenders living in and around their area.”

Mr Elferink said unfortunately the world is not a perfect place, and sexual predators do exist, however a parent is in a much better position to protect their child when they are armed with this detailed information.

“It is the role of Government to protect the community and educate them about potential dangers,” he said.

“While Northern Territory Police will continue to track and monitor around 200 sex offenders in the community, this tool is designed to deliver information to the community about the most serious offenders in an easy, user-friendly way.

“As with most convicted criminals, there is an end date to their prison sentence where they will then be released out into the community.

“We want the community to be well informed and take necessary precautions to protect their children from predators.

“We believe that the public’s right to know takes precedence over the privacy concerns of serious sex offenders.

“While NTSOPW is just one tool for people in the community, parents should always remain alert and vigilant and take the necessary precautions to always protect their children.”

Parents of Daniel Morcombe, Bruce and Denise, have been calling for the introduction of a national child sex offender register since known sex offender, Brett Cowan, was found guilty of their 13 year-old son’s murder, indecent dealing with a child and interfering with a corpse.

Brett Cowan first committed heinous and perverted acts of sexual violence on a six-year-old boy in Darwin in 1993.
Cowan was sentenced to seven years imprisonment, however was released after just over four years. Ten years later, Cowan went on to abduct and murder Daniel Morcombe.

“We commend the Northern Territory Government’s decision to step up and be the first jurisdiction in the country to introduce a public website of this kind,” Bruce and Denise said.

“Every parent has the right to know if there is a dangerous sex offender living in their neighbourhood.

“While nothing can bring Daniel back to us, we are honoured and humbled that the Northern Territory Government has committed to naming the legislation ‘Daniel’s Law’.

“We truly hope that the introduction of ‘Daniel’s Law’ will prevent another family going through the pain and grief we experienced following Daniel’s death.”

The NTSOPW will be based on the ‘Megan’s Law’ model developed and operating in the United States.

The website will also include links to useful child safety information and resources for Territory parents.

The NTSOPW is expected to be launched next year.

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