Northern Territory Sex Offender Public Website (NTSOPW)

15 October 2014

What benefits does the Northern Territory Sex Offender Public Website create for Territorians?

The website will allow individuals and families to familiarise themselves with important details about serious sex offenders in the community. As a result, Territorians will be able to know the information and be more vigilant about serious sex offenders living in and around their neighbourhood.

Doesn’t Western Australia already have a similar website? How is the Northern Territory’s different?

The Western Australia sex offender website is not publicly accessible and anybody wanting to gain the information must prove to authorities why they should have access.

The proposed Northern Territory serious sex offender website will be publically accessible, allowing anybody, anywhere to easily and readily access the information.

What kind of information will be provided on the website?

The website will include the offender’s name, image, physical description (including recognisable traits such as a tattoo) and regional location. Regional locations will be similar to those used in the Northern Territory Crime Statistics (Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs etc.).

How can you guarantee you will protect the identity of victims?

Limited information will be published on the website, primarily if the victim was a child when the offence occurred. The key consideration when drafting ‘Daniel’s Law’ is to ensure there is no detrimental impact on victims or remote communities.

What if the registered serious sex offender changes location?

Registered serious sex offenders that appear on the NTSOPW will be required to regularly report their location to law enforcement authorities. They will also be required to inform authorities if they intend to change location. Law enforcement authorities will make every effort to provide the most up-to-date and accurate information. Offenders from other states who enter the Northern Territory and are required to report on release will be entered onto the website.

What is ‘Megan’s Law’ and why is ‘Daniel’s Law’ based on this model?

www.nt.gov.au
GPO Box 3146, Darwin NT 0801
‘Megan’s Law’ originated in the Unites States following the sexual assault and murder of Megan Kanka in 1994. The known registered sex offender committed of the crimes had earlier moved into the same neighbourhood as Megan Kanka, without the knowledge of her family.

States that have introduced ‘Megan's Law' release information publicly about registered sex offenders living in the area.

Is this the initiative proposed by Derryn Hinch?

No, the model proposed by Derryn Hinch includes the exact residential address and details about the crime committed, which poses a much greater risk of identifying the victim.

Will this information be available to people outside of the Northern Territory?

Yes, anybody, anywhere can access the information.

Is this the first step towards the establishment of a national sex offender public website?

The Northern Territory is the first jurisdiction in the country to announce the introduction of a serious sex offender public website. The Northern Territory Government believes this initiative will benefit Territorians, however it is up to every individual jurisdiction to determine for themselves whether this is something that they wish to introduce.

Won’t publishing a serious sex offender’s details on a public website lead to vigilantism?

The risk of vigilantism will be significantly decreased due to identifying offenders by regional location only, instead of the United States’ model which publishes the offender’s exact address.

The website will also include a warning about using the information for the purposes of criminal behaviour or harassment.

In the development of ‘Daniel's Law’, specific offences for improper use of information on the website may be created.

There are claims that sex offenders may plead not guilty to avoid being identified on the public website. Is there any evidence of this?

There is no clear evidence of this occurring under ‘Megan’s Law’ in the United States, which is largely what the Northern Territory model will be based on. In any event, the Northern Territory Government believes in the public’s right to know over the privacy of serious sex offenders.