

Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022

Submission No: 13
Submitted by: Jack Beasley Foundation
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:



**Police Powers and Responsibility (Jack's Law)
Amendment Bill 2022:**

Submission by the Jack Beasley Foundation

Committee Secretary
Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's consideration of this bill.

This submission has been prepared with the approval of and input from our charity organisation's board of directors.

We welcome the extension and expansion of the knife detection trial to all Safe Night Precincts and public transport infrastructure and vehicles. We support the measures for better transparency around wandering operations and the added definitions around where these powers can be used.

This bill is a result of people in our part of the Gold Coast doing all they can to stop another family going through what the Beasley family have.

We are proud to see this knife violence deterrent measure taking another big step from the initial trial, especially because it is named in the memory of a young life taken too soon.

But with all our hearts, we wish Jack Beasley's name did not come to be so well-known.

There is nothing that could ever replace the loss of this young man for Brett, Belinda, his brother Mitch, for so many of his friends from his school, Pacific Pines State High, the footy club he played at from when he was a junior, the Helensvale Hornets, and from everyone who knew and loved Jack.

It is hard to put into words just how much Jack's murder impacted our community, so as an attachment to this submission we have included Belinda Beasley's full victim impact statement.

We urge the Committee to read Belinda's powerful words, delivered with passion across the courtroom to those who took her son from her.

Sitting just metres from the three young men who were alleged to have played a role in Jack's murder (two had already pleaded guilty) day after day took unimaginable courage from Brett, Belinda and all their supporters.

Seeing and hearing everything that led to his murder played out, step by step, was tough for all of us.

JACK BEASLEY FOUNDATION

WWW.JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

INFO@JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

Jack's friends went one by one into the witness box, recalling and reliving the most traumatic moment of their lives. This included Ariki who was also stabbed that night, the knife just centimetres away from him suffering the same fate as Jack. They all showed so much bravery during that trial.

Jack's Murder

The details of the tragic events that night are easy to find in the public domain, but we will provide a brief summary for context.

It was the middle of school holidays, the busiest time of the year for the Gold Coast and especially for Surfers Paradise. Jack and his friends had caught the tram into the heart of our city and were heading to a party in an apartment.

A group of young men had also caught public transport down to Surfers from Logan. It was their decision to bring a knife with them which would shatter the lives of so many people. After spending a few hours near the esplanade, they ended up hanging out on some benches at the end of Cavill Avenue.

While some of Jack's group went into the shops, the others waited on benches nearby the 'Logan' group. Camera footage shows the most that happened between these two groups was some looks were exchanged. That's it, a random, passing interaction with two groups of young people.

Jack's group kept walking south towards Q1 and when they were a few hundred metres away, the other group of young men started sprinting towards them. They pushed their way through Jack's group, a fight broke out and within a few seconds, Jack was fatally stabbed.

They left Jack to die on the footpath. It was barely 8pm at night in the middle of Australia's tourist capital. It was senseless, it was disgraceful and the young man who stabbed Jack rightly received the maximum sentence for his actions.

The Jack Beasley Foundation

Our foundation was established just weeks after Jack's death. Like many good things, it started with a meeting at our local pub. Brett had reached out to our local MP Sam O'Connor (who is now an executive board member of the JBF) and we gathered a group of friends and supporters to figure out how we could do something about this.

It has been community-led from the very beginning; driven by incredible people who give up so much of their own time. The first public call for change was channelled through a petition calling for metal-detecting powers to be put in place at Helensvale Station, the place where Jack's killers changed from the train to the tram.

With the support of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the State Government, the aim of that original petition to 'detect knives, save lives' has now turned into nation-leading laws to prevent knife crime.

While advocating for legislative change and better police resourcing to deter knife violence is part of the solution, we knew that for us to contribute to making sure no other community would suffer this loss we had to stop young people from even thinking about taking a knife out with them.

That's how our education program was created. Since July 2021, the JBF has visited 23 schools across south-east Queensland and northern NSW. We have received visit requests from other parts of Queensland and even from other states.

JACK BEASLEY FOUNDATION

WWW.JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

INFO@JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

Delivered in partnership with the QPS, the One Moment presentation is all about educating young people on the dangers of carrying a knife and the long-term effects youth violence has on the victims, their families and friends, and on the offender themselves. The presentation goes for an hour and includes Brett and Belinda sharing their experience. They want these young people to understand how one moment can change the lives of so many people.

We know the decision to take a knife when they're heading out is often a split-second one, that it's often done because they think they need it for protection. It is our hope that hearing Brett and Belinda talk about their loss will make some of these young people change their mind.

A QPS officer also attends and runs the students through the laws around carrying knives and tries to give them some awareness about how they are likely not making themselves safer and could become a victim. To see more of what the program looks like, we encourage committee members to watch this short YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/ne-tX69DqQw>

The JBF also hosts some of the largest community outreach events on the Gold Coast.

Each year on the closest Sunday to Jack's death, we have the Walk4Jack. This involves hundreds of people walking a lap around the lake at Damien Leeding Park in Oxenford wearing green, the colour of Jack's footy club, the Hornets. Brett is also a keen motorcyclist so we have the Ride4Jack. He has some of Jack's ashes embedded in a teddy bear which he puts on the front of his Harley to lead a convoy of bikes through to Beaudesert and back. We also have an annual trivia night and sport's lunch as fundraisers.

These are all about raising awareness about our cause and generating support for the work we do. We're just a couple of years in but so far these events engage thousands of people and spread the word about the JBF. The support we receive shows how much our community is behind us.

Just before Christmas we were also very grateful to receive a \$100,000 donation from the Premier. This will help us to further expand our education program to reach even more young people.

Jack's Law

The tragic loss of Jack and too many other young people like him is the reason these laws are so important, but we hope the Committee can see that the JBF accepts decreasing youth violence is complex and this is just one tool to help stop this crisis.

Anecdotally, we have heard from many Gold Coasters about the positive impact the trial has had. Jack's murder in such a public place at such a busy time of year shocked so many people. Since the trial has been running, they feel more comfortable going out at night in our city.

This is especially so for parents of teenage children, knowing the police have these wandering powers is a great reassurance which helps them sleep at night when they know their kids won't be home until early the next morning.

We would like to sincerely thank Police Minister Mark Ryan for continuing and expanding this trial and for agreeing to our requests to name these laws in honour of Jack. It means so much to us that weapons will be taken off our streets and other young people will be protected in the name of Jack.

Over 200 weapons have been removed from the streets of the Gold Coast because of the trial so far.

That is what these laws are all about. With our focus on education, we are confident this will have an impact on youth violence. Our end goal is for these powers to become permanent.

JACK BEASLEY FOUNDATION

WWW.JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

INFO@JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

Taking these police powers state-wide and especially allowing them to be exercised on public transport is what we have been calling for. We want this expanded trial to succeed.

However, it is a big step up from having it occur in just two geographically small precincts on the Gold Coast as it has for the first two years. It is vital for the QPS to be properly resourced to ensure it's carried out as comprehensively as possible. All reports on the trial so far show our police officers have displayed exceptional conduct in how they exercise these powers so far and we thank them for their professionalism.

We broadly accept the suggestions made in the Griffith University review of the knife-wandering trial and we believe the improvements contained in Jack's Law will address these.

These powers should be targeted; they are about dealing with hotspots where knife violence is a clear issue. This was certainly the situation on the Gold Coast where Jack was not the only tragic death from a stabbing incident. Within a year of Jack's murder, 27-year-old Raymond Harris was fatally stabbed within Surfers Paradise as well.

Several other near-fatal knife incidents have occurred across the Gold Coast both in Safe Night Precincts and on public transport infrastructure. This is a clear problem for our city. These laws are an important part of the solution and are already helping Gold Coasters and visitors feel safer and be safer.

The Jack Beasley Foundation will continue to advocate for these knife-detection powers to be made permanent to deter knife crime and we recognise the importance of having a trial to make these measures work as best as they can and to get the balance right.

Finally, there are far too many people to thank. From everyone who has volunteered their time to make our events happen, to the hundreds of people who have shown up in support, to people who have just bought a ticket in one of our pub raffles or put their spare change in our tins on bars across the Gold Coast. We appreciate all their support.

In particular, the JBF would like to place on record our acknowledgement of some outstanding members of the QPS. Now-Deputy Commissioner Mark Wheeler, the driving force for these laws internally and someone who was there for the JBF from the start and now-Superintendent Rhys Wildman, who took over from Mark when he moved to Townsville and has been an outstanding supporter every step of the way.

The detectives who worked on Jack's case Ash, Shane and Nat, they are not only exceptional at their jobs but they went above and beyond during the investigation and especially during the court case, as well as Tracey who was instrumental in establishing the education program and who has now joined the JBF board of directors, as well as the Commissioner Katarina Carroll for her ongoing support from the top. We thank them all for their efforts and are honoured to call them friends.

Thank you again for this opportunity. We would welcome a chance to appear at any public hearings the Committee is holding as part of their consideration.

Kind regards,

The Jack Beasley Foundation



JACK BEASLEY FOUNDATION

WWW.JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

INFO@JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

Belinda Beasley's Victim Impact Statement

On Friday 13 December 2019 we received the most devastating news that a family can get; that our beautiful 17 year old son Jack had been killed at the hands of another.

You have taken away Jack's life and ruined so many others from the choices that you made that night, and for what?

That is the answer we will never know.

Why?

It was just so senseless and in that one moment you destroyed so many people's lives.

Jack was a son, a brother, a grandson, a great-grandson, a nephew, a cousin and friend to so many.

Jack was a cheeky, fun-loving, easy-going kid who loved life, his family and his friends so much.

Jack was kind, so very loyal and protective, compassionate, hard-working and so much more.

We constantly think of Jack's last moments that day. It's something that will never leave our minds.

Seeing Jack's lifeless body, touching him and feeling how cold he was, feeling the stitches all over his body; this is something that is imprinted in our minds and will haunt us for the rest of our lives.

One thing that I can not get out of my mind is when I arrived at the hospital. Hearing the words "they had been performing CPR on Jack from the scene in Surfers Paradise to the hospital and he has been rushed up to surgery".

Every time I hear a siren or see an ambulance I go right back to that night you destroyed our lives and took our beautiful boy's life.

You ran away like cowards and left Jack and Ariki to die on the footpath with not a care in the world, high-fiving each other!

What sort of people are you?

I have had a few dreams of Jack.

They are so real I see his beautiful face with that smile, I hear his voice and his laugh and he gives me the biggest hug.

Then I wake up and realise that it's not real and that we are still living in this nightmare and will until the day we die.

This is our life now; a living nightmare.

All we have are memories of our beautiful boy.

We don't get to see his gorgeous smile, hear his infectious laugh, watch him grow up, finish his apprenticeship, have kids, travel and so much more.

You took this away from Jack.

The memories we do have that should be filled with happiness are now filled with sadness because Jack is gone and we know we are never going to make any more memories with him.

Brett and I will never be the same and struggle on a daily basis to function.

JACK BEASLEY FOUNDATION

WWW.JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

INFO@JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

I see the constant pain in Jack's big brother's eyes and what you have taken from him.

Watching Mitch struggle, knowing we can't bring back Jack and fix it for him, just breaks our hearts even more.

As brothers they were close and had so many plans together.

The pain you have brought to our family is indescribable.

You didn't just kill Jack that day you killed our entire family and we are all just surviving.

Every day we wake up is a constant reminder of what Jack is missing out on and what you have taken from us.

The things you have taken from our family are inconceivable and I truly hope one day you understand the ramifications of what you have done to Jack and so many other people.

There is a trail of other victims:

- Myself, Brett and Mitch and our entire family
- Our friends
- Jack's friends that were there that night, the trauma you have caused them and their families is life-changing and unforgivable
- Jack's friends that weren't there, the loss they have suffered
- Complete strangers that helped try and save Jack and Ariki that night
- Witnesses who saw everything unfold, including children
- First responders

And the list goes on...

Imagine a loved one of yours being taken from you in a senseless act of violence.

This is our life for the rest of our lives.

To lose a child in the way we lost Jack altered our lives forever as the pain never ever goes away and will be with us until we take our last breath.

You will get to live your life and will get to:

- Turn 18, 21 and all those milestone birthdays
- Get married, have kids
- Go on holidays with family and friends

And so much more...

You have robbed Jack and us of any of this and destroyed our family.

Your actions on that night, being a juvenile is no excuse.

Everyone knows right from wrong.

Your choices that night took my beautiful boy's life and that is unforgivable.

I hope you are reminded constantly of the complete devastation you have caused our family, Jack's friends and of the innocent life you took or had a part in taking.

Belinda Beasley

JACK BEASLEY FOUNDATION

WWW.JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG

INFO@JACKBEASLEYFOUNDATION.ORG