

## Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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14 April 2025

Ms Fran Denny  
Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Police Powers and Responsibilities (Making Jack's Law Permanent) and Other Legislation  
Amendment Bill 2025



The Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this Bill. The ADF delivers evidence-based approaches to minimise alcohol and other drug (AOD) harm. We recognise the power of strong communities and the important role they play in preventing problems occurring in the first place. A community-centric approach is at the heart of everything we do.

The ADF is concerned about potential unintended consequences that could stem from the proposed legislation, especially the expansion of police powers to conduct hand-held scanning searches (known as wandering).

In 2022, the Griffith Criminology Institution undertook a review of the Queensland Police Service's Wandering Trial which was implemented in the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach safe night precincts in 2021. The review found an increase in the number of drug detections in Surfers Paradise, and noted that care should be taken to ensure that 'wandering does not lead to a by-passing of reasonable suspicion safeguards, and net-widening among minor offenders who are not carrying weapons, but nevertheless come to police attention purely because of wandering practices'.<sup>1</sup>

The review also noted that increasing numbers of people coming into contact with the police and entering into the criminal justice system could have many adverse effects.<sup>1</sup> The ADF believes adverse flow on effects of the Bill include an increased number of referrals to the Police Drug Diversion Program (PDDP), while funding for the PDDP was set on numbers of drug detections prior to use of wandering. This may lead to a situation in which people detected with a small amount of drugs are unable to access a health response, potentially undermining the health-based approach of the PDDP. The ADF is highly supportive of the PDDP as a health-based response to personal drug use. Increasing wandering practices could increase the pressure on the Queensland Health-funded Alcohol and Other Drug services who deliver the Drug Diversion Assessment Program.

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Additionally, certain communities currently come into contact with the police more often than others. Queensland Police's *Reframing the Relationship Plan 2024-2027* acknowledges that "policing in Queensland has been a mechanism that has negatively impacted the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples". Powers like those within the Amendment provide police with greater ability to legally stop and search people who are not suspected of criminality. Given historical patterns of over policing, we are concerned that this will impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland, leading to further negative consequences for these communities.

Similarly, communities of people who use drugs or are suspected of using drugs have faced negative impacts from policing and stigma towards drug use. Whilst the PDDP provides a pathway into health services for those detected with a small amount of drugs, we have concerns that certain populations may face greater police scrutiny even when there may be no criminal behaviour. These police interactions heighten risk of engagement in the justice system, leading to poorer outcomes for individuals who may need help and support.

This will have the additional burden of increasing stigma experienced by those who use drugs. Stigma often delays or prevents help seeking by people who have issues with their drug use. Stigma contributes to segregation and exclusion and can lead to poorer health outcomes and influence the quality of treatment received by people using alcohol and other drugs.

The ADF thanks the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee for the opportunity to comment on this Bill.

Sincerely,



**Martin Milne**

QLD State Manager

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## References

1. Ransley J, Connell, N., van Felius, M., Wadding S.,. Review of the Queensland Police Service Wandering Trial. Griffith Criminology Institute; 2022. Available from: <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-the-Assembly/Tabled-Papers/docs/5722t1863/5722t1863-952d.pdf>