



Speech by

Paul Hoolihan

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (6.25 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Acts Amendment Bill. It might come as a surprise to some people who know that I was a lawyer when I entered parliament that in a previous life before becoming a lawyer I worked for 18 years in the court system. I worked very closely with the police in terms of their requirements to ensure that we have a safe society. For many years there was a grave deficiency in acts of parliament that gave police powers to protect the average citizen. It is only in recent times, through the continual review of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, that the police force has had a full arsenal of powers to protect citizens.

There are a plethora of small amendments in this bill and, ultimately, I will only speak directly about three parts of it. There will be people who will speak out against some of the extensions to move-on powers, and I will deal with that part of my speech later. Rockhampton, in particular, has had move-on powers for a period of time. They work very well and are accepted by the community. We do have a large Indigenous community who come in from Woorabinda, and that has, in fact, resulted in tolerance being shown by the Indigenous community and police because the members of the Indigenous community were not being locked up as there were other options. The police have accepted that course of action and have taken appropriate steps to ensure that they use the powers sensibly.

There are two new offences created. One is the offence of evading police. There is a reverse onus provision in that particular offence. I note that it has been reported that it is not in accordance with fundamental legislative principles, but there is similar motor vehicle legislation in other states, and even in Queensland, for speeding or parking offences where the owner has to do in who is doing the driving once the police can establish who the owner of the car was. In terms of cutting out some of the dangers to the community of high-speed chases and foolish driving of motor vehicles, I believe that that is a sensible and reasonable approach to the legislation. If we can cut down on those high-speed chases and the danger to the community in terms of the motor vehicle exceeding the speed limit without the police being required to endeavour to catch that vehicle, then society succeeds in providing safety.

In relation to the new offence that is created under the Criminal Code, I believe that that is necessary and should have been given to the police some time ago. The media recently reported that a police officer who had been bitten by a prostitute on the Gold Coast received \$4,500. The woman will subsequently receive a fair swag of money for some information that was given to the police to apprehend a convicted criminal. She really received no punishment for inflicting that sort of injury on our police.