




Speech By  
**Mark Furner**

**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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## **PUBLIC SAFETY BUSINESS AGENCY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (2.59 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak in support of the Public Safety Business Agency and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I am a bit confused because the report that was agreed to by all committee members recommended that the bill be passed in its entirety. It is amazing to come in here this afternoon and hear otherwise. Obviously there is a bit of a disconnect between the shadow minister and the members of the committee, because the non-government members were completely on board with the report and completely on board with the bill. I am surprised like you, Deputy Speaker Elmes, to hear the news that has come to light.

In fact, the committee only heard from two submitters, demonstrating that Queenslanders were comfortable with what the Palaszczuk Labor government is doing in reversing the mistakes of the previous LNP government and correcting a fundamental flaw with respect to what occurred under their stewardship of the PSBA Act. The PSBA, the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services provided an oral briefing to the committee on 15 June 2016. Once again, in respect of that briefing and the two submitters, the committee was comfortable with the content of the bill.

In terms of the objects of the bill, the bill proposes to amend the functions of the PSBA, establish the PSBA board of management, change the role of the chief executive officer and the chief operating officer, finalise the machinery-of-government changes that will allow blue card services to transition to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and allow for the comprehensive integration of the State Government Protective Security Service into the QPS. On introducing this bill, the minister indicated—

It is about undoing the inefficiencies created by the current PSBA model and ... about returning control of relevant resources and processes to the Police Commissioner and the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner.

We know, and we have heard from previous speakers, of the reviews that both the previous government and this government have gone through with respect to reaching a conclusion over recent years. One of those reviews was the Public Service Commission review in 2015. The government engaged the PSC to conduct the PSBA review, which was overseen by a cross-agency steering committee. The review included a significant stakeholder engagement process to hear the key challenges facing the staff of the PSBA and the partner agencies. The report stated—

This included holding employee workshops, inviting confidential individual submissions, engaging with unions and employee associations, and hearing from a variety of other stakeholders with an interest or involvement in the PSBA.

In total, over 600 employees participated in workshops around the state, and more than 60 submissions were received, which provided valuable intelligence to the review.

While finding that the PSBA had achieved some successes and that the model does create many potential opportunities, the PSBA review concluded that stakeholders primarily identified concerns and frustrations with existing arrangements. The report stated—

Fundamentally, it was found that the majority of the identified problems are caused by confusion over the scope, purpose and function of the PSBA. This theme holds true for employees in the partner agencies and the PSBA.

There is a lack of clarity of:

- what the role of the PSBA is and what it is trying to achieve
- what services the PSBA delivers and what services are the responsibility of the partner agencies or others
- what the service expectations are for both providers and clients
- who does what and who is ultimately responsible, and
- where accountabilities lie.

That concurs with the submission from the United Firefighters' Union of Australia, Union of Employees, Queensland. The only other submission was from the Police Commissioned Officers' Union. In the UFUQ's submission—a very professional, proactive and competent union—they indicate—

Following the rushed and problematic implementation by the previous state government of the PSBA, along with other decisions of the previous state government that had a direct negative effect on our members ...

This bill will reverse those issues that were clearly identified in the UFUQ's submission. They went on further to indicate in their submission—

The UFUQ does not see any value in continuing with PSBA.

It is our view that the structure complicates the work of the fire service for no objective benefit.

The essential rationale for implementing PSBA in the first place, was a policy of outsourcing.

There are now even more unnecessary layers of communication and decision making than previously. This added complexity confuses communication channels and clouds accountability at all levels of the organisation.

In conclusion, this bill unshackles those firefighters and police officers—those good men and women—and returns them to front-line services where Queenslanders need them the most. I commend the bill to the House.