




Speech By  
**Brent Mickelberg**

**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2018

**POLICE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (4.00 pm): I rise to speak to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and the subsequent amendments introduced by the government this morning. Of all the responsibilities vested in those who sit in this House, none is more important than protecting Queenslanders. Queenslanders deserve a government that provides the resources and enables their police and corrective services personnel to maintain a safe environment that the community can have confidence in.

That is why I am so disappointed in the Palaszczuk government's kneejerk reactive response to community concern regarding the unsupervised release of recidivist deviants. Queenslanders should be able to have confidence that egregious predators such as Robert John Fardon are tracked for the rest of their natural life. The rights of perpetrators should come second to community safety.

We have seen considerable community concern over recent years when repeat offenders have committed rape and murder while on parole or shortly after release. It is not good enough. We owe it to the people of Queensland to do whatever needs to be done to protect the vulnerable. It is clear that the government is unwilling to make the hard decisions to protect Queenslanders and instead have sought to put a bandaid on the issue by introducing their weak amendments today.

Let us be clear, despite the Attorney-General's assertions that suggest otherwise, these amendments, introduced by the government today, seek to stop Robert John Fardon from roaming unsupervised within the community after his supervision order expires on 3 October. I wholeheartedly support that objective. Frankly, steps should have been taken months ago in anticipation of the fact that such a situation may occur.

All that aside, I welcome the fact that the government has finally decided to do something about an individual who has proven time and again that he is a threat to vulnerable Queenslanders and is not capable of adhering to society's expectations. Unfortunately, it is too little too late. Rather than drafting a considered piece of legislation and following the proper process of committee scrutiny, this government has slapped together a rushed and inadequate piece of legislation that does not go far enough.

It is obvious that those opposite woke up on Sunday and read the media reports about the LNP's tough measures. We then saw those opposite talking tough in the media and then today those opposite have come in here and failed to deliver. They can talk tough on crime, but when it comes down to it Labor just do not have the stomach to do what is required to protect the people of Queensland.

We have already heard today those opposite assert that under their laws serious offenders will be tracked, but the facts are that for a GPS tracker to be applied a reportable offender must engage in concerning conduct that is then intercepted by the police, brought before the court and then sanctioned by a court as a part of a prohibition order. The explanatory notes make it clear that such an order will

only remain in force for five years. It is not good enough to wait until a known offender has engaged in concerning conduct before acting. If an individual is a serious danger to the community then they should be subject to supervision for the rest of their life, without question—not maybe, not could be, but will be.

What Queenslanders deserve is legislation that mandates serious offenders are GPS tracked for life, not some honesty system that will place additional strain on a police service already heaving under the weight of weak sentences and a lack of resources. I, along with other parents from across the state, demand that this government protect our children from those who will do them harm. To the point raised by the member for Kawana today, I for one would not be willing to have a recidivist serious offender living unsupervised in my street, and neither should anyone else. I urge the government to strengthen these laws to mandate the supervision of all violent sexual offenders for life, not only those who commit offences against children.

Moving on to the provisions contained in the bill which was considered by the committee. I note the concerns expressed by the Bar Association and the Queensland Law Society in relation to some of the provisions contained within the bill. In particular, they refer to the provisions that relate to the establishment of a missing person crime scene. I note the concerns in relation to the fact that such provisions may infringe the rights and liberties of owners and occupiers. While I recognise that such measures could be subject to misuse, the greater good of the community in ensuring that the police are able to investigate and deal with critical incidents should take precedence.

I welcome the changes to the parole system contained within the bill. As I mentioned previously, there is considerable community concern in relation to the parole system and measures such as those contained within the bill provide some comfort in relation to those concerns.

The new offence for assaulting or obstructing civilian watch-house officers is also welcome. Similarly, separating the offence of assaulting or obstructing a police officer into two distinct offences is a step in the right direction. Our police deserve to be able to perform their important task of maintaining community safety without being assaulted or obstructed. The persistent cases of soft sentences handed down to those who think it is okay to assault our police are not in line with community expectation.

The people of Buderim deserve to feel safe in their community. The rights of the majority who do not ever, let alone repeatedly rape and assault others must come ahead of those who choose to engage in such disgusting behaviour. For that reason, I implore the government to listen to the community's voice and strengthen the provision in relation to supervision of repeat sexual offenders.