




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 18 September 2018

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

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (6.14 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. It is a great pleasure to speak after the member for Ninderry. We on this side of the House have a number of elected members who are former police officers—the members for Burdekin, Ninderry, Nicklin, Bundaberg and Lockyer. They have served with distinction, and it is great to have them as part of our team. Certainly over the past few weeks I have visited not only the Ninderry electorate but also the Bundaberg electorate. I know that the members for Ninderry and Bundaberg are making outstanding contributions as newly elected members in this place.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge my own local serving police officers—Senior Sergeant Shane Hancock, the officer in charge of the Indooroopilly Police Station, and Senior Constable Dan Egan, who works at the Bellbowrie Neighbourhood Beat. I also acknowledge all of my Neighbourhood Watch groups for the work they do collaboratively with the Queensland Police Service on behalf of my local communities in the electorate of Moggill.

As elected representatives and as legislators, our responsibility, first and foremost, in this parliament should be to ensure safe and prosperous communities and, as such, deliver a safe and cohesive Queensland. Therefore, it is important that we as legislators ensure that those who dutifully choose to serve and protect our community are afforded the powers and resources they require to remain responsive to modern community needs. To grant the Queensland Police Service the additional powers it needs to enhance the efficiency and quality of front-line police services, this bill makes a number of amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Regulation 2012 and the Corrective Services Act 2006.

This legislation will allow our officers of the Queensland Police Service to address evade police offences more adequately. There are also stronger offences with respect to assaulting civilian and other staff within watch houses. That is certainly welcomed. In addition, Labor has today circulated amendments to be made to other acts including the Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004. I will address these in greater detail shortly.

While the LNP will not oppose this bill and its proposed amendments, which are really about Labor playing catch-up, I do wish to note the concerns that have been expressed by stakeholders concerning the rights and liberties of owners and premise occupiers which may be interfered with due to the broad nature of establishing a high-risk missing persons process. While the Queensland Police Service has responded in detail to these concerns, as outlined in report No. 17 of the 56th Queensland Parliament Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I still note that it will be incumbent on the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services and this government to monitor and ensure that these additional powers are exercised appropriately and are in fact not abused.

I also note that with increased or enhanced police powers inevitably comes an increase in reliance on resources and staff—resources and staff that have been reduced and adversely impacted by the Palaszczuk Labor government. As the budget papers revealed this year, the total Queensland Police Service budget has been cut by \$44.6 million. That is nearly \$45 million slashed from front-line services, from those good men and women who, day in and day out, strive to protect our communities. It just shows that when it comes to community safety and policing this Labor government is well and truly all style over substance.

I turn now to the amendments that the Labor government rushed into parliament today and added to this bill—amendments that do not go anywhere near far enough and, again, have highlighted just how hopeless this Palaszczuk Labor government is when confronted with serious community safety issues. The mere fact that the Liberal National Party has had to force Labor to act after three years of inertia, the mere fact that we are here debating these amendments, tells the people of Queensland all they need to know about this Labor government's failed community safety priorities. Labor's failure is now laid bare for all to see. For too long this Labor government has been more concerned about protecting its own image than about protecting the safety of every man, woman and child in Queensland. No amount of spin or additions to ministerial media teams can hide the Palaszczuk Labor government from the fact that it has spectacularly dropped the ball when it comes to keeping Queenslanders safe.

The question really does deserve to be asked: just how did we end up here today? How can a Premier, an Attorney-General, a police minister and a Queensland Labor government be so inept that it was caught unaware that one of the state's most despicable and downright dangerous sex offenders was to be released back into the community?

I think we know why and, sadly, the answer is pretty simple: there was nothing in it for them. Of course this Labor government was caught unaware because there was no photo opportunity to be had with a flashy backdrop, no celebrity endorsement to be made, no feel-good distraction to be announced. With none of this holy trinity present, it simply did not warrant the Labor government's attention. Now Labor is crying foul because the LNP has had, according to the ALP, the audacity to put people before politics and public safety before photo opportunities. Those Labor members opposite can pontificate all they want and no amount of interjections, as we have heard across this chamber today, will ever be enough to drown out the deafening silence that came from Labor when it became clear that a specific offender was due to be released from his supervision order in the next few weeks.

Because the Labor government failed to act, we in the LNP have stepped up. The Premier and Attorney-General can wax lyrical all they want about their robust and workable amendments, but everyone inside and outside this chamber knows that this Labor government had no plan B and has only brought its amendments in today because it was shamed into it by the Liberal National Party. As a case in point, in question time today the Premier was more than happy to reference the 'esteemed journalist Steven Wardill'. I, too, want to quote from Steve Wardill, specifically from his piece dated 31 August this year titled 'Palaszczuk government must act urgently to protect the community from Robert Fardon'—

D'Ath has been Attorney-General since February 2015. Throughout that entire time, Fardon has been on a supervision order and at risk of release. Her comments just show she and the rest of the Government have done precisely nothing to develop a Plan B for if, and when, the Supreme Court decides to release him.

This is not the first time the Palaszczuk government has had to play catch-up with the Liberal National Party, but on an issue as vitally important as protecting Queenslanders from the likes of Robert John Fardon this is no time to be dragged kicking and screaming into doing the right thing. Nor is it the first time that the opposition has had cause to seriously doubt this Labor government's policing and community safety credentials. Earlier today the Premier was more than happy to tout her Attorney-General's record in passing robust and workable laws. Let me take the Premier back to just over a year ago when in this House we debated and passed the no-body no-parole laws. Just how robust and workable was it for the Attorney-General and Minister for Police to use the Pullen family as props for their own benefit as a shining example of families that stood to benefit from those laws when all along the minister knew full well that those laws would not benefit the Pullen family?

An opposition member: He should be ashamed!

Dr ROWAN: I take that interjection. That was not robust and workable. That was reckless exploitation. If you want robust and workable, look no further than the proposed changes brought forth by the Liberal National Party opposition. For the benefit of those opposite, I will remind them again in the hope they may change their mind on our tough, stringent proposals. Unlike the amendments proposed by Labor, the LNP wants there to be supervision of all serious sexual offenders.

In closing, the LNP has always put the safety of each and every Queenslander first and foremost in this parliament and it is a proud track record we will continue to foster well into the future. I will not oppose this bill nor its amendments, but let there be no uncertainty that when the time for this Labor

government came to step up and comprehensively legislate for the benefit of community safety Labor was found wanting. We all know that Labor has dropped the ball on this issue. Under Labor crime is up and sentencing always fails to meet community expectations and standards because Labor is soft on crime.

There are many offenders who are in custody. We know that. There are those who suffer with antisocial personality disorders and those with psychopathic sex-offending histories. Psychiatrists have diagnosed them with such diagnoses through the diagnostic and statistical manual fifth edition or the International Classification of Diseases 10th edition. They have been assessed by psychiatrists and when they are due to be released there are significant community concerns. We need comprehensive legislation that addresses violent repeat sexual offenders who violate both children and adults. We need legislation that delivers real-time monitoring with permanent supervision and adequate resources for implementation, and that is what the LNP has proposed. Labor's self-declared honesty system will not work. It is fanciful and it is farcical and, whilst we will support this legislation, it certainly does not go far enough.