




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.37 pm): I will make my contribution to the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill in two parts. I will firstly talk about the initial changes to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act and then talk about the amendments that we have seen rushed into this place today.

Whenever a matter like this is debated and whenever we seek to change police powers and responsibilities there will always be a debate about the balance between the rights of the individual and the ability to resource the police properly. That debate should always be had. Whichever side of the debate one ends up falling on, if that debate and that contest of ideas is not had we are poorer for it when developing legislation. No society wants to see a police service that is without checks and balances. Likewise, no society wants to see an individual have so many rights they conduct their behaviour with absolute impunity.

Whilst the parties making submissions to the committee proudly put forward the views of their membership, they did so in good spirit. I support the changes the minister has put forward, particularly those that reflect changing technology—things like mobile devices. I think they are sensible and reasonable. I certainly support the changes.

What I do want to comment on is a pretty simple scenario. We can have all the legislation in the world, but if we do not have a properly resourced police service the best legislation accounts for nothing. As the shadow minister and my good friend, the member for Toowoomba North, says, one thing is for sure when it comes to the Queensland Police Service: crime is up because the budget is down. That is a direct correlation. Numbers do not lie.

In the last three years when we see the progression from 245 police officers to every 100,000 people to 242 officers per 100,000 people, the numbers do not lie. I would challenge anyone on either side of this place to tell me that crime is not more of an issue today than it was four years ago. It absolutely is an issue. At a time when we have seen crime go up, at a time when we have seen the watering down of laws, at a time when bikies have been given back the right to come into our communities, to have fewer police officers is quite frankly wrong.

Let me give members an example close to home in my own patch that I proudly represent. When we began our campaign to have the Runaway Bay Police Station properly resourced, barely over half of its entitlement was filled. That was an entitlement of just 24 police officers. Almost half of those positions sat vacant. We cannot enforce law and order if we do not have boots on the ground.

I have another example which is alive and kicking at the moment. In a part of Hope Island a group of youths are acting in a vigilante manner without any fear of the law. They are taking to social media to boast about their exploits. They are hassling people. They are being aggressive. Unfortunately, due

to a lack of policing in that area, which falls into the area of the very busy Coomera Police Station, these youths are carrying on in a manner that is making the community I represent feel afraid. Do I support these changes? Yes, I do. Would I like to see more police to enforce them? The answer is absolutely.

Let's move on to the amendments. We are somehow debating amendments that are so urgent that they have to be done today. Yet the government with a straight face can say it does not relate to one individual in particular, despite the media coverage about that individual. If I name that individual, I imagine the Attorney is going to get up and wave her arms because somehow the government is trying to say with a straight face that this is not in response to: (a) the media pressure that has been mounted; and (b) the legislation that the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Attorney-General have put forward, which in my mind is stronger and is designed to get the result we want. The government says that GPS offenders will be tracked for life, but there is no guarantee of that.

Mrs D'Ath: I have not said that, but that is okay. You can mislead parliament.

Mr CRISAFULLI: We enjoyed the press conference, Attorney. There were a lot of different positions—it was back and forth and inside and out. It was tremendous.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Those on my right will cease interjecting.

Mr CRISAFULLI: For a GPS tracker to be applied under these laws, a reportable offender must engage in concerning conduct that is intercepted by the police. Labor's amendments state that a prohibition order remains in force for only five years, not for the rest of their life. I am not quite sure how we have a situation where the community is being led to believe that somehow this tough legislation will see somebody GPS tracked for life when they may not be GPS tracked at all and, if they are, it may be only for five years.

Labor claim that the police will direct where these offenders live. We would like to see these laws put the rights of the innocent home owner ahead of the rights of repeat sexual offenders. The absolute doozy in all of this is the honesty system—the pedo principles—that somehow the worst of the worst are going to volunteer where they are living and what they are doing. Hardworking police have thrown everything on the line. They have tracked down these offenders and put them behind bars. Some offenders have reoffended within 20 days before. Yet somehow we think that these offenders are going to be well-behaved citizens and tell us where they live.

No wonder Labor continually blocked attempts by the LNP to introduce tougher laws in the parliament. If these amendments are so urgent that they cannot go to a committee, you would hope that some of the things that have been put forward by the shadow Attorney-General may have been considered. You would have thought that would be the case.

In a nutshell, what do the LNP laws mean? The LNP laws would extend supervision orders. This means sexual offenders whose supervision order is about to expire may continuously be subject to their current strict supervision order. I would suggest that the everyday person on the street would say that that makes sense. The LNP laws would mean continuously strict supervision, rather than a meaningless honesty system of checking in. I would suggest that the everyday person on the street would say that that is a sensible suggestion.

Labor's laws do not impose supervision on child sex offenders automatically upon their release from custody or when their supervision order expires. It only applies when a released sexual offender engages in concerning conduct. Surely we would want to protect the rights of innocent Queenslanders against a handful of monsters. The suggestion that has been put forward by the LNP should have been embraced because it was strong, it was visionary and it enacted a plan B at a time when the government ducked and weaved and said there was not an issue and then rushed in laws that do not work.

(Time expired)